



**Depot Town Social District
Operations and Maintenance Plan**

I. Introduction

On July 1, 2020, Governor Whitmer signed House Bill 5781 into law creating the Social District Permit which allows for the sale of cocktails-to-go and alcohol consumption in established Social Districts. Local governmental units now have the authority to establish commons areas within Social Districts that multiple on-premises licensees can use to increase sales via permit.

II. What is a Social District?

A Social District is an area designated by the governing body of a Local Government within their boundaries where consumers are able to drink beer, wine, or spirits in designated commons areas outside the walls or patio/parklet spaces of a licensed establishment. A Social District is not a taxing entity and is overseen by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission.

III. What is the difference between a Social District and a Commons Area?

A Social District is the entire area designated by the Local Government, which includes the commons areas within the Social District. Establishment of a Social District does not mean consumers may drink alcoholic beverages throughout the entire district. Consumption of those beverages is only permitted within the defined commons areas. The Michigan Liquor Control Commission defines a commons area as area(s) within the established Social District that are clearly designated and marked by the Local Government and that are shared by and contiguous to the premises of at least two qualified licensees. Social Districts can include more than one commons area.

IV. What is a Qualified Licensee?

The words "qualified licensee" shall mean any of the following:

- (i) a retailer that holds a license, other than a special license, to sell alcoholic liquor for consumption on the licensed premises;
- (ii) a manufacturer within an on-premises tasting room permit issued under Section 536 of 1998 PA 58;
- (iii) a manufacturer with an off-premises tasting room license issued under Section 536 of 1998 PA 58; and
- (iv) a manufacturer that holds a joint off premises tasting room license issued under Section 536 of 1998 PA 58.

V. Differences between City and Business Owner Process

Per Michigan House Bill 5781, Local Governments are responsible for the creation, maintenance, operation, and signage throughout the Social District. Creation of a Social District does not give local businesses permission to serve to-go alcoholic drinks automatically. Businesses need to go through a separate process with the Michigan Liquor Control Commission and obtain a Social District Permit which allows them to serve to-go beverages within the commons area(s).

VI. Purpose of this plan

This plan is in-place to comply with requirements outlined in House Bill 5781 and required by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission. This plan can change at any time per the discretion of

City Council and City Administration. This plan includes steps that the City will take to maintain and operate the Social District and commons areas to maintain consumer and resident safety.

VII. District Boundaries and Commons Area

The boundaries of the Depot Town Social District shall start at the East side entrance of the Riverside Park entryway on E. Cross St, extending down on both the north and south sides of E. Cross St to N. River St., and continue north up N. River Street on both the east and west sides of the street ending at the parcel line of 400 N. River Street.

Sidewalks and cross walks in this area, the Depot Town Pedestrian Alleyway, and portions of the Freighthouse Plaza north of the caboose are considered common areas. Commons area does not include the licensed premises of any qualified licensee. During street closures, the common areas include the closed off areas of the street. The Depot Town Social District will be open from 10am - 10pm daily.

Special events may request an extended social district commons area to include Market Place Drive and the Ypsilanti Freighthouse (for public events only). Though the Freighthouse has events that may serve alcohol, beverages purchased or served at the Freighthouse may not be taken off premises. Extended social district hours may be requested for December 31st until 1am. The Social District may be temporarily suspended during the hours of operation of a beer tent for an event within the Social District borders that raises money with its alcohol sales.

VIII. Operations Plan

The operations of the Depot Town Social District will be overseen jointly by the City of Ypsilanti and the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority with assistance from the City Department of Public Works with oversight provided by the Chief of Police.

The Depot Town Social District is solely in place to support the economic vitality of the Depot Town district and local businesses owners, and has no regulatory or taxing authority. The City of Ypsilanti will provide supporting documentation that local businesses need for their social district permit applications to the Michigan Liquor Control Commission.

Depot Town Social District Hours of Operation are as follows:

- Daily 10am-10pm.

The Ypsilanti DDA will provide signage placed throughout the district that clearly marks the boundaries of the entire Social District and Commons Areas. Special events utilizing the extended social district borders will place additional signage provided by the DDA. Additionally, the hours of operations signs will also be placed at the north, south, east, and west boundary lines. Public Safety Officers will be utilized to enforce the hours of operations and commons areas boundaries when necessary and appropriate.

Both the City and the Ypsilanti DDA will also have a dedicated section of its website that will include a copy of this plan, hours of operation, maps showcasing boundaries and participating businesses. All of the City and Ypsilanti DDA's communication channels will be utilized to notify consumers when the Social District and/or Commons Areas are closed for maintenance,

or other days determined to present concerns for public Safety.

IX. Maintenance Plan

The City, under regulation established by the City Administration and in conjunction with the Chief of Police, shall maintain the commons areas in a manner that protects the health and safety of the public. Sidewalk and street repairs/maintenance throughout the Social District will follow schedules already in place by the City. Any safety concerns that arise will be addressed by the Department of Public Works on an as needed basis. Other services, including landscaping and snow removal, will continue to be provided by the City and Ypsilanti DDA as well. The Ypsilanti DDA will ensure that all signage remains in good condition and will replace weathered signs as needed.

X. Revocation of Designation

The City Council may revoke the designation of a commons area if it determines that the commons area threatens the health, safety and welfare of the public or has become a nuisance. Before revoking the designation of a commons area, the City Council shall give notice as required under the Open Meeting Act, MCL 15.261 et. seq and hold at least one public hearing on the proposed revocation. The City shall file the revocation of the designation with the Michigan Liquor Control Commission.

XI. Requirement of Permit Holders

A qualified licensee whose licensed premises is shared by and contiguous to a commons area in a Social District designated hereunder shall obtain from the Michigan Liquor Control Commission an annual social district permit. The holder of a social district permit issued by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission may sell alcoholic liquor for consumption within the confines of a commons area if both of the following requirements are met:

- The holder of a social district permit only sells and serves alcoholic liquor on the holder's licensed premises.
- The holder of a Social District permit only serves alcoholic liquor to be consumed in the commons area in a container to which all of the following shall apply:
 - (i) the container prominently displays the social district permittee's trade name or logo or some other mark that is unique to the Social District permittee's on-premises license;
 - (ii) the container prominently displays a logo or some other mark that is unique to the commons area;
 - (iii) the container is not glass; and
 - (iv) the container has a liquid capacity that does not exceed 16 ounces.

A purchaser may remove a container of alcoholic liquor sold by the holder of a Social District permit from the Social District permittee's licensed premises if both of the following conditions are met:

- The purchaser does not remove the container from the commons area

- While possessing the container, the purchaser does not enter the licensed premises of a Social District permittee other than the Social District permittee from which the purchaser purchased the container.
- The consumption of alcoholic liquor in the commons area as allowed herein may only occur during the legal hours of the sale of alcoholic liquor of the social district permittee.

X.

It is critical that businesses sell beverages from within their establishment and/or within the area that their liquor license allows. Businesses cannot sell beverages from the street or sidewalk, but they may sell from a formal patio or other area IF their primary liquor license extends to it. For example: Maiz Mexican Cantinas's seasonal patio is included in its liquor license service area, so staff can serve beverages from the patio. Social District beverages that are sold by a permit holder can be taken outdoors and enjoyed within the Commons Area. However, beverages sold at one establishment cannot enter the premises of any other licensed establishment. For example: a drink purchased at the Wax Bar cannot be taken into Sidetracks, or any other licensed premise.

Key Recommendations:

Businesses are encouraged to write the initials and/or birthdate of the individual to whom each alcoholic beverage is sold on the cup itself, as well as the date of purchase. Drink purchasers should be encouraged to keep their receipt, showing the date the drink was purchased. These recommendations exist to help prevent over service and unlawful transfer of alcoholic beverages to minors, and to promote the general health and safety of the community.

Qualified Licensees as of 11/12/25

734 Brewing Company INC. DBA 734 Brewing Company

15 E. Cross St. Ypsilanti, MI 48198

Aubrees Saloon, INC. DBA Aubrees Saloon / Sticks

41 E. Cross St. Ypsilanti, MI 48198

BRG Investments, INC. DBA Maiz Mexican Cantina

32-36 E. Cross St. Ypsilanti, MI 48198

Depot Town Provisions LLC, DBA Wax Bar

44 E. Cross St. Ypsilanti, MI 48198

NPBC Ypsilanti, LLC DBA Thompson & Co. / Mash

400 N. River St. Ypsilanti, MI 48198

Sidetrack INC. DBA Sidetrack

41 E. Cross St. Ypsilanti, MI 48198