



March 21, 2025

To: Shawn Purvis, Deputy Town Manager
Cc: Randy Vosburg, Town Manager
From: Joanna Helms, Economic Development Director
Re: Social District Plan Draft

The purpose of this memo is to highlight scenarios and options in the social district plan that have not been finalized. This memo includes an overview of the scenarios, options for each scenario, and the staff recommendation currently included in the draft plan.

Background

On July 7, 2022, North Carolina General Assembly Session Law 2022-49 was ratified, codifying local governments' authority to establish "Social Districts" within their jurisdictions. These Social Districts allow for shared spaces where on-premises licensed establishments (e.g., bars, breweries, restaurants) may sell alcoholic beverages in designated containers to be taken into the common area for consumption. Town staff began exploring the option of a social district shortly after the session passed. In December 2024, the Town Council directed staff to develop a social district plan and ordinance to be considered in 2025.

Discussion

The below scenarios represent decision points to still be made for the social district plan. Staff anticipate discussion with the Town Council to receive a general consensus for direction on each scenario.

1. Official signage that opt-in businesses will display in their place of business

Scenario A (included in draft): Town creates and provides signage for ABC permitted opt-in businesses as follows:

- **GREEN LIGHT/GREEN LIGHT** – Business patrons can purchase and take their alcoholic beverage out of the business in a designated Social District cup **and** business patrons can bring in alcoholic beverages from another business in a designated Social District cup.
- **GREEN LIGHT/YELLOW LIGHT** – Business patrons can purchase and take their alcoholic beverage out of the business in a designated Social District cup **but cannot** bring in alcoholic beverages from another business.

Scenario A allows the signage itself to make patrons aware of the regulations at the specific business. The business owner and staff can also advise their patrons if needed.

Scenario B: Town creates signage and provides signage for ABC permitted opt-in businesses:

- **GREEN LIGHT** – Business patron can purchase and take your alcoholic beverage out of here

Scenario B places the responsibility solely on the business to make the patron aware of the situation at the specific business, i.e. the business would have to advise a patron if they could or could not bring in an alcoholic beverage in from another business.

Neither Scenario A nor B pertain to non-ABC permitted businesses. Signage for non-ABC permitted businesses would be created by the Town as follows:

- **GREEN LIGHT** – can bring in your alcoholic beverage
-OR-
- **RED LIGHT** – cannot bring in your alcoholic beverage

2. Required Social District container options regarding the type of cup and reordering of supplies

There are two cup type options to meet the requirements of the social district. Both options are recyclable. Each type of cup differs in cost. A recent survey of downtown ABC-permitted businesses indicated a preference for the clear plastic cup option.

- **Aluminum (included in draft)**
-OR-
- **Clear Plastic** – Apex ABC permitted businesses prefer per recent survey

Social district regulations dictate the size limits of the cups and the information that must be present on each cup. The cups are not reusable on different dates and the inventory will need to be replenished from time to time. Most municipalities provide guidance to businesses for what cups need to be ordered and rely on the businesses to purchase the cups. Some municipalities have provided cups to the businesses.

- **Businesses order from one preferred vendor that the Town designates. (included in draft)** – Town staff is recommending the Town purchase the initial order of containers for all the ABC permitted opt-in businesses (specific amount TBD). After the initial order is depleted, the ABC-permitted businesses will be responsible for ordering their containers.
-OR-
- **Businesses order through a vendor they choose using the required and standardized type, logos, verbiage, etc.**