



# SOCIAL DISTRICTS STANDARDS AND PROVISIONS

March 2023

## Table of Contents:

### 1) Establishing a Social District:

Eligibility ..... 3

Application Process ..... 3

Application Checklist ..... 5

### 2) Doing Business in a Social District:

Licenses ..... 5

District Designation and Logo ..... 5

Beverage Containers and Rules of Use ..... 6

Non-ABC Permitted Businesses ..... 6

### 3) Visiting a Social District:

How does it work? ..... 6

Rules ..... 7

### Appendices

Appendix A – Signage Standards ..... 8

Appendix B – Management and Maintenance Plan Standards ..... 11

## Standards and Provisions

Social districts may be created, designated, and managed within the City of Charlotte with the adoption of Article XV in Chapter 15 of the City of Charlotte Code of Ordinances. The following standards and provisions govern the process and rules for establishing and maintaining social districts.

### 1) Establishing a Social District

The City of Charlotte has established a program to support formal and informal business associations in the creation of social districts that will utilize the public realm to increase patronage and economic vitality of businesses. Social districts must meet eligibility requirements, follow the application process, and adhere to the following guidelines before a petition proceeds to council for adoption into the Charlotte Code of Ordinances (as required by the state).

#### Eligibility

- Social districts must be within City of Charlotte limits and may include public rights-of-way.
- Social districts must contain at least 2 businesses with ABC Permits.
- All social district boundaries are subject to Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT), Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD), and other city departments review. The city reserves the right to deny any proposed locations.

#### Application Process

This section provides general guidance for staff and applicants in the creation of a social district. The entire application timeline will vary, but applicants should allow a minimum of 4-6 months for adoption. Steps highlighted in **BLUE** are for applicants. Steps highlighted in **GREEN** are for City of Charlotte staff.

Gauge Interest	Business owners and associations that would like a social district should first gauge the interest of the neighborhoods, businesses, and property owners in the vicinity of the proposed social district.
Draft District Boundaries	Determine your proposed social district's boundaries in partnership with businesses in the area being considered for the district. Be sure to review the eligibility requirements, community bylaws, etc. District boundaries may be affected through the application process.
Submit Pre-Application Materials	Submit a pre-application on the embedded form at <a href="https://charlottenc.gov/Transportation/socialdistricts/Pages/default.aspx">https://charlottenc.gov/Transportation/socialdistricts/Pages/default.aspx</a> . Your pre-application should include the area you have in mind for the district and a preliminary list of ABC-permitted and non-permitted businesses interested in participating. This will allow City of Charlotte staff to assess the request and put together some helpful guidance.
Pre-Application Review and	Staff will review the proposed social district area and, if necessary, will arrange a date/time for a pre-application meeting. This step may include several rounds of review and comments.



Meeting with Staff	
Draft Signage Plan	Determine proposed locations of required social district signs. The social district must be clearly defined with signs posted in a conspicuous location indicating the social district boundaries. See the Signage Standards in the appendix for additional guidance surrounding signage.
Draft Management and Maintenance Plan	Draft a management and maintenance plan in partnership with businesses in the area being considered for the district. Social districts are responsible for ensuring that the district is maintained in a manner that protects the health and safety of the general public. See the Management and Maintenance Plan Standards in the appendix for additional guidance.
Community Engagement	<p>Upon pre-application approval from staff, social district applicants should begin to gather and document support from businesses and the broader community. Because social districts utilize the public realm, obtaining community support is an essential part of the process and must be included with the social district application. The required community engagement steps are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather signatures of support from at least 51% of the property owners within the district. Petitions shall include the name, business name, address, and phone number of all those who sign it.</li> <li>• Present district boundaries and management and maintenance plans to nearby neighborhood organizations, businesses, and property owners for feedback. All property owners within a ½ mile radius of the social district boundary shall be notified via US mail. The community meeting can be held virtually but a hard copy of the presentation must be made available (if requested) for those without internet access.</li> <li>• Provide at least two letters or other indication(s) of support.</li> </ul> <p>Applications that do not include documentation of community outreach will not be considered.</p> <p>*For registered neighborhoods visit <a href="http://www.charlottenc.gov/nocl">www.charlottenc.gov/nocl</a></p>
Application	Submit a Social District Application at <a href="mailto:socialdistricts@charlottenc.gov">socialdistricts@charlottenc.gov</a> .
Application Review	Staff will review the application for completeness and will follow-up with any comments or revisions. This step may include several rounds of review and comments before proceeding into the council process.
City Council Presentation and Public Comment	<p>Council presentation to consider application based on the appropriateness of the proposed district and community support.</p> <p>The public will be invited to comment on proposed social districts during the Charlotte City Council presentation meeting. Any speakers must register with the city clerk's office.</p>
City Council Decision	Approval is specific to the district boundary and management and maintenance plan presented previously to council and is contingent on approval from the North Carolina Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission (NC ABC Commission).

Website	Upon adoption by City Council, the City of Charlotte shall post management and maintenance plans for the social district, a map of the boundaries of the social district, and days and hours during which alcoholic beverages may be consumed in the social district, on the city’s website.
NC ABC Commission	Before allowing consumption of alcoholic beverages in a social district, the city shall register the district with the North Carolina ABC Commission. The city shall submit a detailed map of the social district with the boundaries of the district clearly marked and the days/hours during which alcoholic beverages may be consumed in the district to the NC ABC Commission.
Social District Implementation	With the ABC Commission registration, you are set to implement your social district!

### Application Checklist

- Application Cover Letter
- District Map
- Signage Plan
- Management & Maintenance Plan
- Petition indicating support of at least 51% of the property owners within the district
- Documentation of Community Outreach
- 2 - Letters of support from neighborhood and business organization(s)

## 2) Doing Business in a Social District

### Licenses

Any business establishment within a Social District desiring to engage as a participant must hold a valid ABC permit. Any business not originally listed on the Social Districts application must notify the city before engaging as a participant. The establishment shall be responsible to operate its business in accordance with all city and state ordinances, laws, rules, regulations, and operations plan governing Social District activities.

### District Designation and Logo

The City of Charlotte has created and established a unique brand and logo (“the mark”) that can be shared and enjoyed by patrons and businesses alike in the city’s authorization and regulation of social districts. The mark is designed for both color and black and white applications, from promotional digital displays to beverage containers and signage. The mark shall be customized according to each district’s unique neighborhood name where it will be located.

The mark deviates from the city’s standard corporate approach in color and typography to identify the brand mark as its own, separate from all other government communications. The mark utilizes the city’s

registered service mark, the Charlotte crown, to identify the government's involvement in social district authorization and regulation. For more information or questions regarding logo design, send an email to [creativeservices@charlottenc.gov](mailto:creativeservices@charlottenc.gov).

### **Beverage Containers and Rules of Use**

Businesses participating within a Social District may only sell and serve alcoholic beverages on its licensed premises.

Businesses shall only sell alcoholic beverages for consumption in the social district in a container that meets the following requirements:

- The container clearly identifies the business from which the alcoholic beverage was purchased
- The container clearly displays the city-created logo that is unique to the social district in which it will be consumed
- The container shall not be glass or single use plastic
- The container displays, in no less than 12-point font, the statement, "Drink Responsibly – Be 21"
- The container shall not hold more than 16 fluid ounces
- The container should be reusable, recyclable, or compostable/biodegradable

*Note: This section does not apply to containers on the licensed premises.*

Any business establishment which holds a valid ABC permit shall not allow a person to enter or reenter its establishment with an alcoholic beverage purchased elsewhere.

### **Non-ABC Permitted Businesses**

Businesses contiguous to the district without a valid ABC permit may participate in the district by allowing beverages purchased in the district on their premises. It is recommended that businesses who would like to participate in this way include the social district logo on their door to indicate participation.

## **3) Visiting a Social District**

### **How does it work?**

- Order your alcoholic beverage from one of the participating businesses located within the district
- Drink from a specially designed container that meets the requirements of the Social District
- Enjoy strolling through the district while shopping and exploring the district
- Discard your cup prior to exiting the district

### **Rules**

- Drink responsibly
- Drinks must be consumed in the official cup received at drink purchase
- Don't refill drinks
- Visitors may stroll with their beverages within the district only during operating hours
- Don't carry drinks into another bar or restaurant that serves alcohol
- Don't carry drinks outside of the district
- Don't litter

# Appendix A

## Signage Standards

Updated: November 3, 2022



## Intent

The purpose of this appendix is to establish minimum criteria for the design, placement, and installation of signage in accordance with North Carolina G.S. § 18B-904.1. This document is not intended to be a prescriptive design manual and the City of Charlotte encourages districts to create unique and representative designs. A signage plan shall be submitted to the City of Charlotte that displays each individual sign location and design that meets the requirements.

## Content

All social district signage shall contain the following content:

- Name and logo of the social district
- Days and hours of operation
- Telephone number for the local Alcohol Law Enforcement (ALE) Division, (980) 781-3000, and CMPD, 911
- A statement that an alcoholic beverage purchased for consumption in a social district shall:
  - Only be consumed in the social district
  - Be disposed of before the person in possession of the alcoholic beverage exits the social district unless the person is reentering the licensed premises where the alcoholic beverage was purchased
- The phrase “Drink Responsibly”
- The phrase “Do Not Litter”

Social district signage shall not contain advertising for permittees, sponsors, or any other entity. The exact verbiage of all signs shall be approved by the City of Charlotte before installation.

## Dimensions/Shape/Material

Social district signage should be a uniform size, shape, and material throughout the district. Signage should be permanently affixed to a post and location approved by CDOT. Metal or corrugated signage is acceptable for use within the social district. Ground mounted signage (A-frame, yard signs, etc.) are not permitted. Signage should be no larger than 18” X 18”.

## Placement

Social district signage shall be located at all social district boundaries. Signage should be placed a minimum of 18” from the back of the curb and as close to the right-of-way line as practicable. Signage shall be posted at a minimum height of 7’ above grade. Signage shall not impede any travel lane, bike lane, or sidewalk.

## Installation/Permitting

Prior to the installation of social district signage, the applicant shall obtain an encroachment agreement from the Charlotte Department of Transportation. For additional details, please visit the following link: <https://charlottenc.gov/Transportation/Permits/Pages/EncroachmentAgreements.aspx>. The City of Charlotte will not furnish or install signage for social districts.

## Maintenance

Maintenance activities should consider proper position, cleanliness, legibility, and visibility. Damaged or deteriorated signs shall be replaced. To ensure adequate maintenance, the Management and Maintenance Plan and Encroachment Agreement should identify the responsible party and establish a schedule for maintenance and replacement of signs. The City of Charlotte will not maintain the social district signage.

# Appendix B

## Management and Maintenance Plan Standards

Updated: November 3, 2022

## Intent

The purpose of this appendix is to establish minimum criteria for the management and maintenance plan for a proposed social district.

## Content

The management and maintenance plan shall contain the following content:

- Introduction
- Responsible Management Parties
- District boundaries
- Permitted ABC establishments
- Non-ABC businesses that have opted-in
- Businesses that have opted-out
- Operational details (effective days, times, etc.)
- District logo and beverage container requirements
- Sanitation and maintenance plan\*
- Financing plan

Additional information on the management and maintenance of a social district is encouraged but not required.

\*Note: The City will not provide additional trash receptacles or disposal services above those that are already in place within the district at the time of creation, if any such services exist. Collection of waste or recyclable materials will be the responsibility of the district.