



Sip n' Stroll Downtown Guide

CITY OF RALEIGH

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About Sip n' Stroll Downtown

Sip n' Stroll Downtown, Raleigh's pilot social district, allows people to sip beer, wine, or cocktails as they stroll through a defined area of downtown Raleigh. Social districts have been implemented in various towns and cities across the state since [the North Carolina General Assembly enacted legislation \(revised July 2022\)](#) allowing municipalities to designate areas where alcoholic beverages can be purchased from a licensed ABC permittee, and then taken outdoors.

It is anticipated that the social district will be a valuable tool in increasing economic activity and vibrancy of downtown Raleigh.

Sip n' Stroll Downtown went into effect August 15, 2022.

What is a social district?

A social district is a defined area where alcoholic beverages, sold by an establishment licensed for the sale of alcoholic beverages for on-premises consumption, may be consumed.

Social District Boundaries



Here is an online [map](#) of the social district.

Days and Hours of Operation

The social district will operate seven days a week from 11:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
11:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	11:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	11:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	11:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	11:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	11:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	11:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Participation in the social district by a special event is at the discretion of the special event permit holder.

Participating and Non-Participating Locations

Businesses located within the social district boundaries can submit this [form](#) to identify whether they want to opt-in or opt-out of the district.



Window clings will be displayed in businesses to identify their status:

- **SOLD HERE** - Purchase Sip n' Stroll drinks at these establishments
- **WELCOME HERE** - Sip n' Stroll drinks welcome in these non-ABC permitted establishments
- **NOT PERMITTED HERE** - Sip n' Stroll drinks not allowed; Sip n' Stroll drinks not available for purchase

Here is a list of Sip n' Stroll Downtown [participating and non-participating locations](#).

City Property and the Social District

It shall be unlawful for any person to possess an open container of malt beverages or unfortified wine on any property owned, occupied, or controlled by the City (including parking facilities) unless that property has been designated by the City as eligible for the consumption of alcohol under the rules of the social district and applicable State law. Any City properties designated as eligible will be signed accordingly.

Social District Requirements

The social district must meet the following requirements under North Carolina law:

- An alcoholic beverage purchased for consumption in the social district must:
 - be consumed in the social district.
 - be disposed of before exiting the social district unless entering a business within the social district that allows alcoholic beverages to be brought inside the business.

ABC Permittee Requirements

A permittee located and selling alcoholic beverages within the social district must meet the following requirements under North Carolina law:

- The permittee must:
 - only sell and serve alcoholic beverages on its licensed premises.
 - only sell alcoholic beverages for consumption in a container that meets all of the following requirements:
 - The container clearly identifies the permittee from which the alcoholic beverage was purchased.
 - The container clearly displays a logo or some other mark that is unique to the social district in which it will be consumed.
 - The container is not comprised of glass.
 - 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.

A permittee located and selling alcoholic beverages within the social district should meet the following City of Raleigh requirements:

- The permittee should:
 - write the time and date when served on the social district cup
 - place recycling receptacles at the interior door of their establishment

ATTENTION:

ANY ABC PERMITTEE PARTICIPATING IN THE SOCIAL DISTRICT IS STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO CONSULT WITH THEIR OWN ATTORNEY OR ABC COMMISSION STAFF TO FAMILIARIZE THEMSELVES WITH THE STATUTORY AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SOCIAL DISTRICT AND THE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES THEY SELL THAT ARE CARRIED INTO THE DISTRICT

Patron Requirements

The possession and consumption of an alcoholic beverage in a social district is subject to all of the following requirements of North Carolina law:

- Only alcoholic beverages purchased from a permittee located in the social district may be possessed and consumed.
- Alcoholic beverages must:
 - only be in designated social district containers.
 - only be possessed and consumed during the days and hours set by the City:
 - Seven days a week from 11:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m.
- A single patron cannot be sold or delivered alcoholic beverage drinks in excess of:
 - Not more than two alcoholic beverage drinks at one time if any of the following:
 - A malt beverage, unfortified wine, fortified wine.
 - Not more than one alcoholic beverage at one time if an alcoholic beverage drink is a mixed beverage or contains spirituous liquor.
- A person must dispose of any alcoholic beverage before exiting the social district unless entering a business within the social district that allows alcoholic beverages to be brought inside the business.

Special Events



Photocourtesy of VisitRaleigh

Recent changes in North Carolina law allow a special event located within a social district to receive a permit for the sale of alcohol within their event area from the ABC Commission. ABC Commission staff have indicated to the City that a special event permittee may participate in a social district if the requirements under North Carolina law to do so are followed, including allowing beverages with social district cups to be carried from and into the special event area. Participation in the social district is at the special event holder's discretion.

Event organizers will have the choice to allow social district beverages within their event footprint or not. Our office will educate event organizers and determine their preference. Businesses within the social district will receive event notifications and whether portions of the social district will be impacted by special events with or without alcohol.

Sip n' Stroll Downtown Frequently Asked Questions

What is a social district?

A social district is a defined outdoor area where alcoholic beverages, sold by an establishment licensed for the sale of alcoholic beverages for on-premises consumption, may be consumed.

When does the social district go into effect?

Sip n' Stroll Downtown is expected to go into effect August 15, 2022. The pilot program will continuously be evaluated to implement any necessary changes.

How will the social district boundaries be marked?

Here is a [map](#) of the social district. Signage and sidewalk decals will be posted at boundaries.

What are the days and hours of operation of the social district?

Sip n' Stroll Downtown will operate seven days a week from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Why does the social district end at 10:00 p.m.?

10:00pm is consistent for when special events end, and it captures the end of dinner and retail hours before bleeding into nightlife activity.

Why are Moore Square and Nash Square not included in the social district boundaries?

The social district allows people to drink beer, wine, or cocktails in a defined outdoor area. Liquor is not allowed in City parks; therefore, parks are not included within the social district boundaries.

How does a business opt-in to the social district?

Businesses can submit this [form](#) to identify if they want to opt-in or opt-out of the social district.

How will participating businesses be marked?

You can see a list of participating locations [here](#). Window clings will be displayed in participating businesses to identify those that have opted into the district.

What cups will be used for the social district? What is the cost to my business to use these cups?

Due to long lead times for printed cups, in the interim, businesses are responsible for purchasing and using their own cups which must conform to the statutory requirements for social district cups. PET/PETE (Polyethylene Terephthalate) cups are the preferred type businesses are encouraged to obtain. The City of Raleigh produced stickers that must be displayed on the cups. Establishments are required to indicate their business name on the sticker in addition to the date and time the alcoholic beverage is served.

What are the requirements of a social district cup?

- Container clearly identifies the permittee from which the alcoholic beverage was purchased.
- Container clearly displays a logo or some other mark that is unique to the social district in which it will be consumed.
- Container is not comprised of glass.
- 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.

Sip n' Stroll Downtown Frequently Asked Questions (Cont'd)

How will the City of Raleigh handle litter associated with the social district?

City of Raleigh staff installed additional recycling receptacles along the perimeter of the district, directing patrons to dispose of their cups before exiting.

How many alcoholic drinks can I purchase at one time in the social district?

A single patron cannot be sold or delivered alcoholic drinks in excess of:

- Not more than **two** alcoholic beverage drinks at one time if any of the following:
 - Beer or wine.
- Not more than **one** alcoholic beverage at one time if an alcoholic beverage drink contains liquor.

Can I take an alcoholic beverage in my social district cup home with me?

- Cups should be disposed of in a nearby recycling receptacle prior to exiting the social district.
- Alcoholic beverages must be sold by a permittee located within the social district. No personal beer, wine, or liquor can be brought into the social district.

Can I drink my own alcoholic beverage, pour it into a Sip n' Stroll cup, and walk around in the social district?

No, only drinks purchased from qualified businesses within the social district are allowed. No cans, glass bottles, or outside drinks are permitted within the boundaries.

Will additional outdoor seating be provided within the social district?

Patrons can enjoy their beverage in public gathering spaces and downtown plazas i.e., City Plaza, and Market and Exchange Plazas. Many establishments within the social district have outdoor seating options that provide seating for the patrons of their business.

Can a mobile pushcart sell alcoholic beverages as a part of the social district?

No. Participating locations must be a fixed permanent establishment with an ABC permit for on-site consumption as outlined in NCGS [18B-904.1\(a\)](#).

Can a convenience store sell alcoholic beverages to-go as a part of the social district?

No. Participating locations must have an ABC permit for on-site consumption as outlined in NCGS [18B-904.1\(a\)](#).

What do I do if I am a retailer within the social district and do not want alcohol inside my business?

All businesses located within the social district have the option to opt-out of the district; you do not have to allow alcohol within your place of business. Signage will be provided to all businesses that choose to participate or not to clearly indicate whether they are part of the pilot program.

Can I take my alcoholic beverage into a vehicle within the social district?

No. No person shall possess an alcoholic beverage while driving a vehicle, including bicycles and scooters. An open container of any alcoholic beverage is also prohibited in the passenger area of any vehicle while on right-of-way within the social district.

Sip n' Stroll Downtown Frequently Asked Questions (Cont'd)

What happens if I leave the social district boundaries with an alcoholic beverage?

Individuals who leave the social district in possession of alcoholic beverages can be criminally charged with the City of Raleigh ordinance for open container of alcohol on property owned or controlled by the City of Raleigh and/or applicable state laws regarding the unlawful possession, consumption of spirituous liquor.

How will the social district be enforced?

Alcohol Law Enforcement (ALE) and local law enforcement have jurisdiction over the social district.

How can I report when I see individuals breaking the regulations of the social district?

- You can call the Raleigh Police Department's Non-Emergency number at 919-831-6311 or use the [online crime reporting system](#). Note: In case of emergency when an immediate response is needed, call 911 as usual to report the details of the crime you witness.
- You can also report violations to the Alcohol Law Enforcement Division, Wake County ABC Enforcement, and Raleigh Police Department.

Additional Questions

For more information about Sip n' Stroll Downtown, Raleigh's pilot social district, reach out to us at hospitality.programs@raleighnc.gov or call 919-996-2200.

Feedback

Tell us what you think about Raleigh's pilot social district. We welcome feedback and use this in future planning.

[Sip n' Stroll Downtown Feedback Form](#)