
City of Hillsdale Social District Management and Maintenance Plan



Introduction

The creation of Social Districts in Michigan was enabled originally through January 1, 2025 by Public Act 124 of 2020. Social Districts were designed to allow restaurants, breweries, and other businesses to serve customers in outdoor public spaces as a response to the pandemic. On March 10, 2022, Governor Whitmer signed Public Act 27 of 2022, which eliminated the sunset date, set standards for allowing Social Districts to remain open during special events, clarified local governments' ability to set hours of operation, and allowed drinks to be taken into hotels.

The Historic Hillsdale Refreshment Area is the program name for the Hillsdale Social District. Patrons will be able to enjoy an adult beverage while strolling within downtown Hillsdale during the designated hours. To consume an alcoholic beverage outside, a patron must purchase a drink in an approved cup from a participating establishment located within the Historic Hillsdale Refreshment Area. The purchaser cannot carry the cup out of the designated Commons Area or into another bar or restaurant.

All State of Michigan and City of Hillsdale laws regarding public intoxication, impaired driving, and open containers apply to areas both inside and outside of the Social District boundaries.

The program is managed by the City of Hillsdale Economic Development Office.

What Businesses Can Participate?

Any Qualified Licensee within the boundaries of the Social District in good standing with the City of Hillsdale, Hillsdale County, and the State of Michigan may participate. Participating license holders must obtain a Resolution of Support from the Hillsdale City Council prior to applying for a permit through the Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC). The City of Hillsdale Economic Development Office will guide businesses through this process to ensure it is as simple as possible.

The term Qualified Licensee is defined by MCL 436.1551(8)(c):

- A retailer that holds a license, other than a special license, to sell alcoholic liquor for consumption on the licensed premises. (This includes the following license types: Class C, Tavern, A-Hotel, B-Hotel, Club, G-1, G-2, Brewpub.)
- A manufacturer with an on-premises tasting room permit issued under section 536.
- A manufacturer that holds an off-premises tasting room license issued under section 536.

A manufacturer that holds a joint off-premises tasting room license issued under section 536.

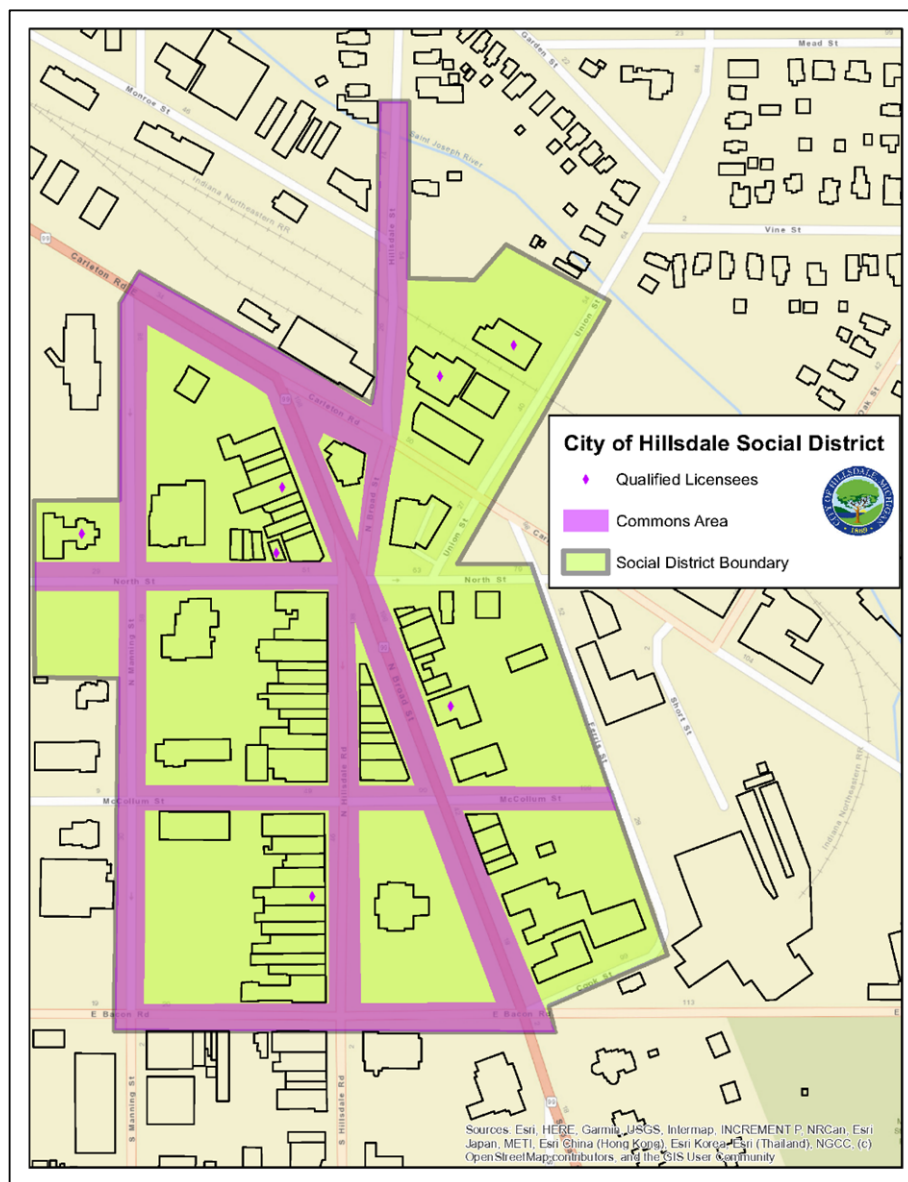
A list of all licensees, sorted by county and local governmental unit, may be found on the MLCC website: <https://www.michigan.gov/lara/bureau-list/lcc/licensing-list>.

Hillsdale Social District Boundaries

The Hillsdale Social District is shown below.

- The area designated in green is the portion of Hillsdale’s downtown district in which a participating business must reside.
- The area designated in purple is the Commons Area. This area is restricted to designated public sidewalks and walkways. Cups must be disposed of before exiting the Commons Area.
- Public streets are ONLY included when the street is designated a temporary Event Commons Area by the City of Hillsdale and the street has been appropriately closed to all vehicular traffic, excluding emergency vehicles.

View the map online at: [\[INSERT LINK AFTER PLAN IS APPROVED AND UPLOADED TO WEBSITE\]](#)



Administration

Roles and Responsibilities: The Hillsdale Social District is overseen by the City of Hillsdale Economic Development Office. District management and day-to-day operations are assisted and informed by the city's police department, public services, and other city departments as necessary.

- **Security:** Security and enforcement in the Hillsdale Social District is provided by the Hillsdale City Police Department. Periodic reports will be provided to the Hillsdale City Council to document any security or enforcement issues that arise.
- **Sanitation:** General trash collection and litter pick-up will be handled by the Hillsdale Department of Public Services on a regular basis. License holders are required to furnish a trash receptacle with a minimum capacity of 30 gallons and an attached lid, to be placed outside of the business's entrance for the disposal of district cups. The trash receptacles must be emptied nightly at the closing time of the Social District, and shall not be emptied into city-owned trash receptacles. Additional sanitation needs, including placement of additional receptacles or portable toilets and/or additional collection times, shall be evaluated over time and may be enhanced during activities that may be reasonably expected to draw large crowds.

Hillsdale City Council Authority: The Hillsdale Social District operates year-round. Modifications to this Management and Maintenance Plan will be considered as necessary. At any point, the Hillsdale City Council may revoke the Social District designation if it determines that the program threatens the health, safety, or welfare of the public or has become a public nuisance. Before revoking the designation, the governing body must hold at least one public hearing on the proposed revocation. The governing body shall give notice as required under the Open Meetings Act of the time and place of the public hearing before the public hearing.

District Designation and Marketing: The boundaries of the Hillsdale Social District will be clearly designated and marked with signs and graphics in clearly visible areas. Flyers identifying the boundaries of the Commons Area will be available at all Social District Permittees' premises, as well as other strategic locations.

Social District Financing: Participating licensees are required to pay for their Social District Permit from the Michigan Liquor Control Commission. Costs associated with the administration of the Hillsdale Social District will be funded through the sale of Hillsdale Social District logo stickers, which must be placed on each beverage container before sale. Social District Permittees must purchase Hillsdale Social District logo stickers exclusively through the City of Hillsdale Economic Development Office. A surcharge of \$0.50-\$1.00 will be added to the production cost of each sticker. Revenues generated from sticker purchases will pay for the stickers, sanitation, signage, and any other costs of managing the program. Revenues beyond those needed to cover Social District costs will be retained by the City of Hillsdale Economic Development Office to be used for public improvements and services within the district.

Insurance: Businesses applying for a Social District Permit will be required to have liability and casualty insurance listing the City of Hillsdale as an additionally insured in an amount of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and with an aggregate coverage of \$2,000,000 for liability. On request by the City, a business will deliver a copy of the insurance policy and/or certificate naming the City of Hillsdale. Businesses may not order Social District stickers until the appropriate certificate has been provided.

Operations

Hours: The Social District will operate year-round, seven days a week, Monday – Sunday, from 12 p.m. to 10 p.m. For an individual Social District Permit holder, the sale of Hillsdale Social District beverages for consumption in the Commons Area may only occur during the legal hours for sale of the Permittee under Section 436.1551 of Act 58 of 1998. The cutoff time for sales of Social District beverages will be 30 minutes prior to the district closing time in order to allow patrons to finish their beverages and dispose of their cups before the district closes each night.

Beverage Containers: The Hillsdale Social District will be branded as the Historic Hillsdale Refreshment Area. Social District permit holders will be responsible for sourcing non-glass containers that hold no more than 16 fluid ounces with their business name or logo prominently displayed on them to serve the beverages in. Compostable or biodegradable options are strongly recommended. Stickers bearing the Historic Hillsdale Refreshment Area logo must be placed on each cup before sale. The cups may not be reused, must remain in the establishment where they were purchased or in the Commons Area, and may not be taken into another bar or restaurant that did not sell the beverage. Cups may be taken into retailers at the discretion of each business. Social District Permittees are required to write the initials and/or birthdate of the individual to whom each alcoholic beverage is sold on the cup itself, and the time it was served. This requirement exists to help prevent over service and unlawful transfer of alcoholic beverages to minors, and to promote the general health and safety of the community.

Marketing and Promotion: The City of Hillsdale’s Economic Development Office manages marketing for the Hillsdale Social District. Marketing may be done through traditional free media, social media, or paid advertising. The City anticipates that any official social media presence for the Hillsdale Social District will be handled through the City of Hillsdale’s social media accounts.

Festivals/Special Events: Events planned within the Social District may request a temporary Commons Area in conjunction with the planned event. Temporary Commons Areas may occur in public streets, if the street is closed to all vehicle traffic with the exception of emergency vehicles. Requests for temporary Commons Areas will be reviewed and approved by the City in conjunction with a street closure request. Sufficient notice will be required in order to coordinate with the Hillsdale City Police Department and other Social District permit holders regarding the updated hours of operation for the district.

Communication with Social District Permit Holders: Social District Permit holders will be required to submit an email address to the City of Hillsdale for use when communicating important information that pertains to the Hillsdale Social District. Such information may include, but is not limited to, upcoming special events that will alter the hours of operation of the district.

Issuance/Revocation of Permits

How Do Businesses Sign Up?

Qualifying licensees must submit to the City of Hillsdale Economic Development Office proof of liability and casualty insurance listing the City of Hillsdale as an additionally insured in an amount of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and with an aggregate coverage of \$2,000,000 for liability. Once the proof of liability insurance is received, a Resolution of Support will be prepared for approval by the Hillsdale City Council. Once a resolution is approved, licensees must apply for a Social District Permit from the MLCC. Upon receiving a Social District Permit from the MLCC, the licensee must inform the City of Hillsdale and purchase Hillsdale Social District logo stickers in order to begin selling beverages for consumption in the Commons Area.

- **Information on the MLCC Social District Permit Can be Found Here:**
<https://www.michigan.gov/lara/bureau-list/lcc/faq/social-districts>

Revocation of Social District Designation and/or Permits

At any point, the Hillsdale City Council may revoke this designation if it determines that the program threatens the health, safety, or welfare of the public or has become a public nuisance. Before revoking the designation, the governing body must hold at least one public hearing on the proposed revocation. The governing body shall give notice as required under the Open Meetings Act of the time and place of the public hearing before the public hearing.

If a permit holder in the Social District is determined to be violating the rules laid out in the Hillsdale Social District Management and Maintenance Plan, the MLCC will be notified of the violation and efforts may be taken to recommend the revocation of the licensee's Social District Permit.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: What are the operating hours of the Hillsdale Social District?

A: The district will operate year-round, seven days a week, Monday through Sunday from 12 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Q: Can I walk anywhere with my Hillsdale Social District cup?

A: You must stay within the designated Hillsdale Social District Commons Area boundaries.

Q: Can I take my Hillsdale Social District drink into other businesses?

A: Patrons can enjoy their beverages in public spaces within the boundaries of the Hillsdale Social District Commons Area. Patrons may not take drinks served at one location into another bar or restaurant, or onto their service space. Some non-alcoholic serving businesses located within the boundary may choose to allow patrons to enter their establishments with drinks.

Q: Can I reuse an empty Hillsdale Social District cup to purchase another beverage?

A: No. When ordering a beverage, it must be served in a new cup.

Q: Can I bring my own alcoholic beverage, pour it into a cup, and walk around downtown?

A: No. Only drinks purchased from authorized businesses in the Hillsdale Social District are permissible. No cans, glass bottles, or outside drinks are permitted within the boundaries per State and local law.

Q: Who do I contact with questions?

A: Sam Fry, City of Hillsdale Marketing and Development Coordinator, sfry@cityofhillsdale.org, 517-437-6412.

Definitions

“Commons Area” means an area within a Social District clearly designated and clearly marked by the governing body of the local governmental unit that is shared by and contiguous to the premises of at least two other qualified licensees. Commons area does not include the licensed premises of any qualified licensee.

“Local governmental unit” means a city, township, village, or charter authority.

“Historic Hillsdale Refreshment Area” is the programmatic name given to the Hillsdale Social District.