

Downtown Smithfield Launches New Social District to Boost Community Engagement and Support Local Business

The Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation (DSDC), in partnership with the Town of Smithfield, is proud to announce the official launch of the Downtown Smithfield Social District – a new initiative aimed at creating a more vibrant, walkable downtown experience.

Starting this week, visitors will be able to enjoy alcoholic beverages in designated outdoor areas within the Social District boundaries. The district will operate on the following schedule:

- Wednesday – Friday: 3:00 PM – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 PM – 10:00 PM

The district boundaries are clearly marked with signage throughout downtown, and a detailed map is available online and at participating businesses. Additional trash receptacles will be placed at entry and exit points to help maintain a clean and welcoming environment.

How It Works:

Participating businesses with alcohol permits may serve beverages in plastic containers no larger than 16 ounces. Each beverage must be clearly labeled to identify the establishment where it was purchased, in accordance with state guidelines.

All businesses located within the Social District—whether they serve alcohol or not—will display signage on their entrances indicating whether they allow alcoholic beverages inside. Businesses that do not serve alcohol may choose whether to allow customers with beverages to enter and may set their own policies regarding conduct and cup disposal.

Town open-container laws remain in effect, and alcohol must only be consumed within the designated district. Violations should be reported to local law enforcement.

“This new initiative is about more than just enjoying a drink outdoors,” said Heidi Gilmond, Executive Director of the Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation. “It’s about building a more connected, lively downtown—supporting our local businesses, encouraging community engagement, and creating a space where people want to spend time together.”

The Social District reflects a growing trend among North Carolina communities to create lively, people-friendly downtowns that encourage both community interaction and local commerce. The DSDC and the Town of Smithfield are committed to managing the district responsibly and ensuring it enhances the downtown experience for all.