



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

City Solicitor's Office

Danielle L. Pacik
City Solicitor

John J. Conforti
Deputy City Solicitor

DATE: August 8, 2025

FROM: John J. Conforti, Deputy City Solicitor

SUBJECT: House Bill (HB) 467

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council,

House Bill (HB) 467, which was signed into law on July 7, 2025, permits cities and towns to allow the operation of “social districts” subject to the provisions of the statute. Social districts are a “defined outdoor area in which a person may consume alcoholic beverages sold by a licensee.” It should be noted that a social district is more expansive than a license area currently permitted under RSA 178:24. The City currently grants licenses to several licensees to expand the service area for alcoholic beverages adjacent to their properties. Social districts would allow a designated alcoholic beverage consumption area that is shared by multiple establishments that are licensed to sell alcohol. It appears that districts can be established on a temporary basis with limitations on hours or days of operation.

Social districts must be clearly defined both by location and time and dates when the district is in effect. Any municipality seeking to establish a district is required to create a maintenance plan that must be submitted to the Liquor Commission. Additionally, businesses that wish to participate must only sell alcohol on their premises in containers that are subject to strict labeling and size requirements. Moreover, patrons cannot bring alcohol from one establishment within the district into another. Further administrative rules related to social districts are anticipated to be established by the Liquor Commission in the near future. The statute takes effect on September 5, 2025.

HB 467 authorizes New Hampshire towns and cities to allow the operation of social districts within the municipal boundaries, subject to local approval. In Concord, the City Council may vote to place the question of whether to allow the operation of social districts in Concord on the municipal election ballot. The question is as follows: “Shall we allow the operation of social districts within the city?” The City Council may vote to place this question on the municipal election ballot with or without a public hearing. Alternatively, the question shall be placed on the municipal election ballot upon submission to the City Council of a petition signed by 25 registered voters.

In the event that the City Council votes to place the social district question on the municipal election ballot, it is required to hold a public hearing on the question at least 15 days, but not more than 30 days, before the election. If a majority of those voting at the election vote “Yes,” social districts may be operated within the city.

In the event that the City Council votes to place the social district question on the November 4, 2025 municipal election ballot, the timeline below offers general guidance as to how to proceed.

Social District Timeline

August 11, 2025 (City Council Meeting)

- The City Council may vote to place or not place the social district question on the November 4, 2025 municipal election ballot, or alternatively, notice a public hearing to assist in determining whether the City Council should place the social district question on the ballot.

September 8, 2025 (City Council Meeting)

- If applicable, the City Council holds a public hearing to determine whether the City Council should place the social district question on the ballot.
- If applicable, the City Council votes to place, or not place, the social district question on the November 4, 2025 municipal election ballot.
- This would be the last opportunity to add the question to the November 4, 2025 ballot.

October 6, 2025 – October 20, 2025

- Social District (HB 467) Public Hearing must be held on the social district question at least 15 days but not more than 30 days before the November 4, 2025 municipal election. Holding the Public Hearing during the scheduled City Council meeting on October 14, 2025 would meet this requirement.
- If the social district question is on ballot, the social district (HB 467) Public Hearing Notice shall be posted in at least 2 public places in the City and published in a newspaper of general circulation at least 7 days before the Public Hearing.

November 4, 2025

- Election Day