Main Street Entertainment Zone Management Plan

May 2026
City of Santa Monica

About Santa Monica Entertainment Zones (EZSM)

Entertainment Zones are designated areas in Santa Monica where people can buy open container drinks (alcoholic drinks “to-go”) from local bars, restaurants, wineries, and breweries to enjoy outside in common spaces like plazas, sidewalks, and streets during designated hours.

Program Objectives

Guiding objectives for an Entertainment Zone include:

a. Activate commercial corridors downtown and city wide
b. Increase revenue for Santa Monica restaurants and bars
c. Catalyze broader economic stimulus
d. Ensure equitable distribution of program benefits
e. Amplify the perception of Santa Monica as a vibrant cultural hub.
f. Enhance and complement community events.

5 EZ Rules:

For the safety and enjoyment of participants, volunteers, employees, and the surrounding community, everyone must understand and follow the 5 EZ Rules.

1. You must be 21+ and wear an official “EZSM” wristband to enjoy alcoholic drinks to-go.
2. Only alcoholic drinks purchased from participating EZSM businesses are allowed.
3. Alcohol taken to-go must be in a non-glass, non-metal container.
4. Finish your drink before exploring another bar, restaurant, or shop.
5. Enjoy your alcoholic beverages within the Entertainment Zone boundaries.

Activation with Events Only

The Main Street Entertainment Zone is event-based. Any activation, in whole, or in part, of the Main Street Entertainment Zone is subject to all required regulatory approvals, including obtaining a Community Event Permit, if applicable, pursuant to SMMC Section 4.68 or a Temporary Use Permit pursuant to SMMC Chapter 9.44.

Section II: Main Street Entertainment Zone Ordinance: SMMC Chapter 6.44

Santa Monica Municipal Code Section 6.44.030(e) specifies the location, hours, and permit requirements for the Main Street Entertainment Zone. Additional regulations and restrictions for activation of the Event Based Main Street Entertainment Zone are provided in Section III of this management plan.

a. **Permissible Area** - All public streets, sidewalks, and public rights-of-way on Main Street between Pico Boulevard and the City Limits at Dewey Street, including portions of side streets west of Main Street to Neilson Way for: Bay Street, Bicknell Avenue, Pacific Street, Hill Street, Kinney Street, and Ashland Avenue are designated as the Main Street Entertainment Zone under Sections 23039.5 and 25690 of the California Business and Professions Code.



b. **Permissible Hours** - Outdoor consumption of alcoholic beverages within the Main Street Entertainment Zone is authorized up to seven days a week between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 a.m., subject to limitations imposed as part of an approved Community Event permit, if applicable, or a Temporary Use Permit and any additional limitations imposed by any ABC permit or license and by the Management Plan for the Main Street Entertainment Zone.

c. **Types of Alcohol** - Off-site sale of open alcoholic containers by a participating holder of an ABC license or permit may consist of beer, wine, and/or distilled spirits subject to the conditions and limitations imposed on the establishment by their local entitlements or ABC privileges, and any additional limitations imposed by the Management Plan for the Main Street Entertainment Zone

Section III: Main Street Entertainment Zone Vision and Additional Regulations

1. Overview

The Main Street Entertainment Zone aims to enhance Main Street's vibrant recurring and one-off events. The vision is to establish a flexible urban amenity that caters to both the local community and visitors. Four main objectives steer the vision:

- **a.** Establish an attraction by allowing open containers of alcohol on Main Street during events drawing visitors to Santa Monica for this unique experience.
- **b.** Implement Marquee Community events that draw attention and signal change.
- **c.** Offer reoccurring events that keep people staying longer and engaging in new ways.
- **d.** Create a "third place" as part of Main Street community events that supports impromptu and planned gatherings and entertainment.

2. Operators

The Main Street Entertainment Zone is operated in partnership with the following groups:

a. The City

During an event the City will process any required Community Event permit, if applicable, or a Temporary Use Permit; receive all necessary applications, plans, and materials for review and issuance of permits, which may include but are not limited to Security Coordination Plan, Insurance, Traffic Management Plan and permits, Zero Waste Management Plan, Neighbor Notification, Business Licenses, and Event Signage, road closures, and business licenses.

b. Entertainment Zone Lead (MSBIA)

As the Main Street Entertainment Zone Lead, Main Street Business Improvement District Association (MSBIA) coordinates the Participating Businesses and Community Partners with the responsibility of operating the Main Street Entertainment Zone in alignment with the Management Plan and serves as the Point of Contact for activations and running general logistics including:

- Serve as the vendor of EZSM branded wristbands.
- Coordinate and distribute event themed cups (if used).
- Creating and setting up signage marking boundaries and displaying rules within the EZ, including the 5 EZ Rules.

- Track business participation ensuring only businesses who have completed a participation agreement and training are selling to-go drinks in the EZ.
- Collecting economic data and conducting periodic business and community surveys to monitor the impacts of the EZ.

c. Participating Businesses

Participating businesses with on-sale alcohol licenses who register with the City and with state ABC may serve open containers for consumption within the Main Street Entertainment Zone provided that:

- Businesses must complete and submit the EZSM Alcohol Service Participation Agreement to the City.
- ABC shall be notified annually of a business's intent to participate using ABC's Entertainment Zone Participation Notification Tool. Cite SMMC 6.44 as the "Ordinance Code" for ABC. Forward the ABC's "Proof of Notice to Participate" to ezsm@santamonica.gov with the name of your restaurant/bar and address in the Entertainment Zone in the body of the email
- Businesses must obtain and maintain appropriate insurance as detailed in the EZSM Alcohol Service Participation Agreement.
- Prior to each event, participating businesses shall notify their employees of the activated boundaries of Main Street Entertainment Zone and refresh staff on the "5 EZ Rules".
- Employees engaging with the public at participating businesses must complete, and annually renew:
  - Alcohol awareness training sponsored by ABC or the Santa Monica Police Department
  - Bystander Intervention Training
- Bystander Intervention Training and Alcohol Awareness Training is not required for a business/vendor with a *temporary* ABC license provided all employees serving alcohol have a valid Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) Certificate.

3. Activation and Programming

The Main Street Entertainment Zone is an event-based EZ, only. All activations must receive a Community Event Permit, if applicable, pursuant to SMMC Chapter 4.68 or a Temporary Use Permit pursuant to SMMC Chapter 9.44. Operators should plan to offer various types of activations and events that cater to a range of interests.

Types of Events in the Main Street Entertainment Zone:

- **Recurring Events:** Special themed activations programmed and advertised to occur weekly, monthly, or seasonally aimed at drawing a cross section of visitors and residents. Examples may include a summer concert series or art walks. Recurring events can be held as sidewalk only events or as part of a partial or total closure of public streets within Main Street Entertainment Zone.

- **Marquee Community Events:** Special one-day/weekend long events that are typically larger and one-off or held annually aimed at attracting locals as well as a regional audience. Examples include celebrations for national or cultural holidays, musical performances, or festivals, such as Summer Soulstice. Marquee Community events could attract thousands of people over an eight-hour period. Marquee Community events will typically be part of a full or partial street closure within Main Street Entertainment Zone.

Activating an Event

- **Notify Entertainment Zone participants and City stakeholders:** At least 2 weeks prior to any Entertainment Zone activation, the Entertainment Zone Lead shall notify Entertainment Zone participants and City stakeholders of the following:
    - Date and time of the EZ activation
    - Boundaries of the EZ activation
    - Brief description of the event
    - Event producer contact

  List of City stakeholders to be contacted are:
    - Santa Monica Police Department: chad.goodwin@santamonica.gov; susana.wessels@santamonica.gov; david.hodgson@santamonica.gov
    - Santa Monica Fire Department: SM.FirePrevention@santamonica.org
    - City Planning: planning@santamonica.gov
    - Economic Development: econdev@santamonica.gov
    - Community Events: communityevents.mailbox@santamonica.gov

- **Community Event Permit or Temporary Use Permit Requirement:** Any event activating the Main Street Entertainment Zone as a whole or in part must obtain a Community Event Permit if applicable, or a Temporary Use Permit.

- **Street Closure Permit Requirement:** An event within the Main Street Entertainment Zone proposing to close streets to vehicular traffic must be processed as an Open Street Event through the Community Event Permit.

    - Multi-block events proposed within the Main Street Entertainment Zone may require closure of Main Street and/or east-west thoroughfares at the

discretion of public safety departments and subject to applicable road closure regulations and procedures.

- **Hours of Operation**: Any business within the Main Street Entertainment Zone holding an alcohol sales license allowing on-site sales and consumption of alcohol issued by ABC (typically restaurants/ bars) may sell alcoholic beverages for consumption during activated hours and within the activated portion of the Main Street Entertainment Zone.

    - The Main Street Entertainment Zone shall be activated only between 11AM to 10PM. Activation outside of these hours is possible by special request such as to accommodate international events occurring in other time zones or cultural events such as a New Years Eve celebration.

    - Regardless of the hours the EZ is activated all participating businesses must abide with any restrictions to the hours of operation imposed by local regulations including Conditional or Minor Use Permit Conditions, as well as regulations imposed by other governmental agencies including ABC.

- **Age Verification:** Participating businesses shall affix an official EZSM branded wristband to the wrist of any individual purchasing an alcoholic beverage to-go after confirming they are 21 years of age or older. Wristbands shall be worn at all times one is in possession of an alcoholic beverage within the Main Street Entertainment Zone. Security staff designated by MSBIA and properly trained on ABC guidelines for age verification may also issue wristbands.

- **Purchase in-Zone:** Outside alcohol is not allowed to be consumed within the Entertainment Zone. Alcoholic beverages consumed within the Entertainment Zone must be purchased at a participating business licensed for on-site sales and consumption of alcohol and within the activated portion of the Entertainment Zone.

- **Containers:** Alcohol may not be served in a glass or metal container for to-go service. To-go containers may be disposable, however compliance with the City's Zero Waste Principles and Disposable Food Service Ware Ordinance (SMMC 5.44) is required.

- **No Carry-ins:** Alcoholic beverages purchased at one business may not be brought into any other business regardless of if they have an alcohol license or not.

- **Boundaries:** No open containers of alcoholic beverages may be removed from the activated portion of the Main Street Entertainment Zone. Signage shall be located at the boundaries of the Entertainment Zone notifying the public that alcoholic beverages may not be removed from the Zone.

    - To-go containers purchased from participating business must be taken directly to the Main Street Entertainment Zone. Exits and walkways through other businesses, to side streets or an alley may not be used by customers carrying open containers of alcohol.

- **Signage:** Signs shall be posted within all participating businesses and elsewhere within the Zone conveying the boundaries of the Activated EZ and the 5 EZ Rules of the Entertainment Zone:

    1. You must be 21+ and wear an official EZSM wristband to enjoy alcoholic drinks to-go.
    2. Only alcoholic drinks purchased from participating EZSM businesses are allowed.
    3. Alcohol taken to-go must be in a non-glass, non-metal container.
    4. Finish your drink before exploring another bar, restaurant, or shop.
    5. Enjoy your alcoholic beverages within the Entertainment Zone boundaries.

- **Security:** Security provided during special events/activations of the Entertainment Zone shall be facilitated by the event organizer and subject to the conditions of the Community Event Permit, as applicable, or a Temporary Use Permit.

- **Sidewalk Bars:** Participating businesses with sidewalk dining or parklette adjacent to a street may establish a temporary bar within their licensed sidewalk dining footprint for service directly onto the Main Street Entertainment Zone during an activation of the Entertainment Zone. The Sidewalk Bar shall be subject to regulation by the Sidewalk Dining Guidelines and ensure;
    - The adjacent sidewalk is not blocked and minimum clear width for ADA access is always provided.
    - That the line of customers waiting to purchase or waiting for their beverage and/or food are not in the street

Design

The Main Street Entertainment Zone Operators aim to enhance the area with continued implementation of low-cost physical and programmatic interventions that cultivate a sense of place and pride.

- Physical Improvements: This might involve movable furniture for flexible use, temporary stages, overhead string lighting, and branded banners affixed to street poles.
- Programmatic Elements: This might include performances by small musical groups, bands, and DJs, along with engaging activities such as ping-pong tables, kid-friendly games, and book readings, Arts, Culture, and Entertainment
- The Main Street Entertainment Zone Operators will curate artistic, cultural, and entertainment programming that draws on the district's layered cultural history to create a welcoming and inclusive experience.

4. Economic Development and Community Benefit

a. Maximizing Economic Benefit for Participating Businesses

The Main Street Entertainment Zone Operators will prioritize strategies that enhance economic benefits for brick-and-mortar bars and restaurants selling open containers, including:

- Placemaking as Economic Development: The proposed activation and programming can draw new customers to Main Street. By creating a clean, safe, and sociable street atmosphere with engaging events, the Main Street Entertainment Zone will encourage people to socialize and linger, ultimately benefiting Participating Businesses and surrounding businesses.

- Media Promotion: The Entertainment Zone Lead will leverage its social media channels and collaborate with the public relations firms to generate positive media coverage about Main Street's success. This can attract more visitors to boost sales.

b. Collaboration for Broader Economic Stimulus

The Entertainment Zone Operators are committed to collaborating with diverse businesses to stimulate economic growth throughout the neighborhood. The Entertainment Zone Lead has a history of collaboration and cross-promotion with businesses for event programming and activation.