

Doing Business in Downtown Lapeer

If you are starting a new business in or relocating an existing business to Downtown Lapeer, you may have questions on what is required in order to get started, and what services are available to assist you.

Before You Start: If you need assistance getting your business off the ground the Lapeer Development Corporation (LDC) may be able to help. LDC serves business owners in Lapeer County by indentifying suitable properties, assisting in securing development funds and acting as your local, state and federal government liaison. LDC also provides marketing information, business consulting, tax incentive and job training assistance. See *Contact Information at right.*

Location, Location

The City Zoning Ordinance regulates the types of uses that are permitted on all properties throughout the City. If you do not yet have a location for your business, you will need to know which zoning districts to search. If you have a location selected, you should ensure your business is permitted there before you sign any lease or purchase agreement.

Most of what is considered "Downtown Lapeer" is zoned CBD-1 or CBD-2, Central Business Districts. Other property within the DDA Development District, which extends beyond the core downtown, contains different zoning designations. A listing of all the uses permitted in each zoning district can be found in the City Zoning Ordinance which is available on the City of Lapeer website:

<http://www.ci.lapeer.mi.us/ZoningOrdinance2.htm>. If your proposed use is not listed, please contact the City Planning Department for assistance.

Interior building renovations

Once you have a property selected, please contact the City Building Department to determine if any physical improvements will be required to bring the property up to current building code standards, and if any permits will be required to complete those improvements. Also, please be aware that if you are planning interior renovations that are NOT required, permits may still be necessary; please contact the Building Department for information.

Exterior building changes

If you are planning any exterior building changes please be aware that the City Zoning Ordinance contains standards for exterior building design and materials (Section 7.15.01.) Please contact the Building Department to determine whether or not any permits are needed.

Facade Improvement Loans are available through the DDA for qualifying projects. The DDA must approve

Contact Information:

LDC Exec. Director, Patricia Lucas 810-667-0080
www.lapeerdevelopment.com
DDA Exec. Director, James Alt 810-728-6598
Building Department 810-245-9621
Darryl Oliver, Building Official
Planning Department 810-664-4553
City Clerk, Donna Cronce 810-664-5231

What's the difference between the CBD, the DDA, and DBA?

Central Business District (CBD) refers to the zoning designation of most of the core downtown. **CBD-1** is the area along Nepessing St. comprised of historic commercial buildings that utilize public City lots and streets for parking, due to lack of on-site parking. **CBD-2** parcels are generally located along Park Street and Clay Street and may have on-site parking and/or accessory buildings.

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is a volunteer board established under State statute (PA 197 of 1975) to guide development and fund public improvements within a defined Downtown Development District. The DDA offers certain services such as Façade Improvement Loans and Sign Assistance Grants to properties within the DDA District.

The Downtown Business Association (DBA) is a 501c6 non-profit organization whose membership consists of participating downtown business owners. The DBA strives to promote Downtown Lapeer through community events, publications, social media, and collaboration with other local organizations.

all façade designs that will be considered for their Façade Loan Program. Please contact the DDA Director for information and assistance.

Signage

Most signs require a permit from the Building Department. The Zoning Ordinance contains a section on signage, Article 7.17, which contains information on permitted and prohibited types of signs. Questions can be directed to the Planning Department or Building Department.

The DDA has a **Sign Assistance Grant** available to help offset the cost of qualifying signage. Please contact the DDA Director for more information.

Participation

Many special events and festivals take place in Downtown Lapeer throughout the year, such as Classic Car shows, Farmer’s Market, Art Fair, Halloween Treat Walk, and Winterfest, to name just a few. The Downtown Business Association (DBA) coordinates many of these events. Other events such as the annual Ice Cream Social, Family Fun Day and Lapeer Days are organized by other groups in the community.

The DBA also manages the *Downtown Lapeer* website, publishes the *Discover Downtown Lapeer* brochure, and serves as a liaison to new businesses. Please consider becoming a member of the DBA and exploring the many ways to contribute to the success of our downtown.

The Flow Chart below recaps the items explained above:

