

# City of East Lansing Downtown Development Authority

## Downtown Liquor License Evaluation Criteria

### Background

Dining establishments are of particular importance to the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) due to their impact on the overall environment of the downtown and its attractiveness to a wide segment of customers. Policies and recommendations made by the DDA to City Council can influence which businesses choose to locate in downtown East Lansing. Establishments that meet the City's Code definition as a restaurant (Chapter 8, Article IV, Section 8-181), hotels, and other establishments as outlined in Chapter 18 of the City's Charter may qualify for licenses made available through the Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC).

Class C and other liquor licenses for the sale and consumption of alcohol on premise are granted by the MLCC. The MLCC provides a quota of liquor licenses to the City based on population. Once the quota is reached, a restaurant or hotel within the DDA district may qualify to apply for a Development District or Redevelopment Project Area License made possible through State Law (MCL 436.1521a). It is also possible to transfer a license within Ingham County into the City if one can be purchased by the applicant from another licensed business within the County. There are other license types that may also be available through the MLCC (Resort, etc). In any event, applicants need to obtain necessary City and State approvals.

The City Council regulates liquor licenses through a Special Use Permit (SUP). This process includes reviews and recommendations by the East Lansing Police Department, the DDA, the Planning Commission, and final review and consideration of approval by the City Council. If approved, the Council will issue a resolution that is necessary for the State-level (MLCC) review to occur.

These Evaluation Criteria were developed by the DDA in conjunction with several key stakeholders. Applicants within the DDA District must fill out this document as well as the applications below:

1. Fill out and submit a Special Use Permit Application for the onsite sale/consumption of alcohol:

<https://www.cityofeastlansing.com/DocumentCenter/View/1488/Land-Use-Development-Application-Special-Use-Permit-PDF>

2. Fill out and submit a liquor license application and fee (\$150)

<https://www.cityofeastlansing.com/DocumentCenter/View/610/Liquor-License-PDF?bidId=>

3. Fill out and submit a Restaurant License Application and fee (see schedule)

<https://www.cityofeastlansing.com/DocumentCenter/View/622/Restaurant-License-Application-PDF?bidId=>

### **Evaluation Criteria Framework**

These evaluation criteria recognize that high quality dining establishments are essential to diversify the current mix of restaurants (see Appendix A: Downtown Restaurant List). A diversified mix of restaurants, particularly high quality sit-down establishments should attract a broader base of business and residential activity while expanding the potential audience that might visit, shop and reside in downtown. The DDA will encourage the recruitment and approval of these types of restaurants.

It is not the intent of these evaluation criteria to place any new restrictions or regulatory burdens upon existing businesses. Retention of existing businesses remains a DDA priority. These criteria serve as a guide to review and evaluate new liquor licenses as well as expansions or modifications to existing licensed businesses in the DDA District which result in a modification to an SUP.

These criteria have been chosen with the recognition of the importance of decisions and recommendations made by the DDA regarding the approval and support of such dining establishments. The DDA desires to diversify the entertainment, retail and residential options available in downtown.

The community have informed these criteria through the master planning outreach and other public participation events (e.g., Park District community conversations). Most notably, [the City's Comprehensive Plan](#) includes:

#### **Action 2-1.5:**

Continue to collaborate with downtown property owners to recruit a broader diversity of retail including, but not limited to urban grocery, soft goods, boutiques, and higher quality restaurants.

### **Evaluation Criteria Components**

#### **A. Location**

The criteria apply to the entire Downtown Development Authority District (See Appendix B: DDA Map).

#### **B. Dining Mix**

The DDA seeks to encourage and foster the development of unique, high quality, full service restaurants that appeal to singles, couples and families in all age ranges.

Quick serve lunch-focused restaurants and more traditional drinking establishments currently dominate the downtown market. Restaurants that enhance the dining mix



**Hours of Operation**

Restaurants with an emphasis on food service generally have shorter operating hours than those with an emphasis on alcohol sales and will typically close before midnight. City Code requires that a restaurant’s kitchen remain open until closing.

**Please describe your hours of operation and explain how it meets the evaluation criteria goals.**

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**Entertainment Licenses**

Restaurants that appeal to singles, couples, and families in all age ranges may occasionally utilize an entertainer. However, most do not rely on entertainment as a critical source of attraction. If the applicant applies for an entertainment license after getting an initial SUP without an entertainment license it will trigger an SUP modification and require another review.

<b>Entertainment License Type</b>	None	Entertainment Only	Entertainment & Dance
<b>Select one</b>			

**Please describe any plans for Entertainment Licenses and explain how it meets the evaluation criteria goals.**

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**Management and Operations Experience**

Restaurateurs who have proven operations experience are preferred over those that have little to no experience in the business. Proven operations experience is demonstrated by responsible business practices unique to a university community. Such practices include exemplary compliance with liquor license laws and city regulations, an excellent customer safety record, and policies that encourage responsible customer behavior.

The DDA will consider the applicant’s background and to what extent it relates to the proposed establishment. Staff will prepare a summary of the applicants’ background and the DDA will decide how to weight it in relation to the proposed restaurant.

**Please provide additional context regarding your management team and operations experience:**

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**Restaurant Type**

A desired outcome of these criteria is to encourage fine dining and theme/family restaurants. While other types of eateries are acceptable, they must be considered as an enhancement to the district to qualify for a favorable recommendation by the DDA.

Restaurant Type	Fine Dining	Unique Cuisine	Family/ Theme	Fast Food or Fast Casual
Select One				

**Definition of Restaurant Types**

**Fast Food/Quick Service Restaurants (QSR):** Traditional fast food restaurants with no table service, lower quality food products (i.e. pre-processed or prepared ingredients) low price points. These include restaurants with carryout services only. Examples include McDonald’s, Burger King, Taco Bell, Chinese carryout only.

**Fast Casual:** Low to medium quality product with no table service and low price points. Examples include Panera Bread, Qdoba, Fazolli’s, Boston Market.

**Family/Theme:** Medium to higher quality product with table service, medium price points. Examples include TGIFriday’s, Applebee’s, P.F. Changs

**Fine Dining:** High quality food product with high level of table service and high price points. Includes “upscale casual” referring to fine dining in a casual atmosphere. Examples include Troppo, Common Grill, Red Cedar Grill.

**Unique Cuisine** – Emphasis on unique cuisine and/or quality of, that is unavailable elsewhere in the market, for example Cajun, Carribean, soul food.

**Please explain your restaurant type and how it will enhance the district:**

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**Alcohol Training**

**Please explain your plan to provide training to your staff by recognized organizations (TIPS, CARE, TAMS) to acknowledge responsible, pro-active management that addresses the challenges with underage and excessive drinking:**

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**Intangibles/ Other Elements for DDA Consideration**

There may be elements not reflected in the above evaluation criteria that merit recognition as part of the DDA consideration, including, but not limited to: uniqueness of concept, local history and/or reputation, inclusion in a city-supported redevelopment project, outdoor seating, and other elements that enhance the aesthetics, ambience, and variety of amenities downtown.

**Please describe any additional aspects of your plans that you would like the DDA to consider as part of their evaluation:**

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**Violations of Liquor Law or Local Ordinances**

If an applicant has a liquor law violation pending adjudication by the Liquor Control Commission, a recommendation on the SUP application will be deferred by the DDA until the violation is adjudicated. If the violation is found valid, the DDA will recommend a one-year waiting period for reconsideration. Any other violations that resulted in punitive action by the LCC may delay DDA consideration of SUP review.

Table 1: Summary of Evaluation Criteria (to be filled out by DDA Staff)

Criteria	Summary			
	Maximum Seating Capacity	Under 100	101-200	201-300
Closing Time	By Midnight		After Midnight	
Entertainment License Type	None	Entertainment Only	Entertainment & Dance	
Management and Operations Experience	Extensive Experience and Training	Limited Experience and Training	No Prior Experience	
Type of Restaurant	Fine Dining	Unique Cuisine	Family/Theme	Fast Food or Fast Casual

Intangibles/ Other Elements for Consideration		
Unique Concept	Projects that combine high quality food with entertainment venues not found in the marketplace, e.g., Dave & Busters (adult arcades), Lucky Strike (upscale bowling alley), etc.	
Local History and Reputation	Recognize local management talent	
City Development Project	Part of a City and/or DDA supported project	
Outdoor Seating	Desire to improve downtown ambience	
Other		

Recommendation	New SUP	
Favorable		
Unfavorable		



**Appendix A – Updated Downtown Restaurant Listing (1/07/19)**

<b>Business Name</b>	<b>Business Address</b>	<b>Licensed</b>
Beggar's Banquet	218 Abbot Rd.	Y
Bell's Greek Pizza & Vienna Café	1135 E. Grand River Ave.	
Biggby Gourmet Coffee	270 W. Grand River Ave.	
Bistro 43	300 M.A.C. Ave.	Y
Black Cat Bistro	115 Albert Ave.	Y
Blaze Pizza	437 E. Grand River Ave.	
Bowl Express	1139 E. Grand River Ave.	
Bruegger's Bagels	505 E. Grand River Ave.	
Bubble Island Tea	515 E. Grand River Ave.	
Buffalo Wild Wings	360 Albert Ave.	Y
Campus Burger	551 ½ E. Grand River Ave.	
Charlie Kang's	127 E. Grand River Ave.	Y
Chichi and Papa	1105 E. Grand River Ave.	
Chipotle	539 E. Grand River Ave.	
Cold Stone Creamery	200 M.A.C. Ave.	
Conrad's College Town Grill	311 W. Grand River Ave.	
Conrad's College Town Grill	1219 E. Grand River Ave.	
Cosmos/Punk Taco	1367 E. Grand River Ave.	Y
Cottage Inn Pizza	615 E. Grand River Ave.	
Crab Hero	235 Ann St.	
Crunchy's	254 W. Grand River Ave.	Y
Dublin Square	327 Abbot Rd.	Y
East Café Hong Kong	1001 E. Grand River Ave.	
East Lansing Tasty Twist	1137 E. Grand River Ave.	
El Azteco Restaurant	225 Ann St.	Y
Espresso Royale	527 E. Grand River Ave.	
Everyday (Chinese Family Buffet)	1375 E. Grand River Ave.	
Fieldhouse	213 Ann St.	Y
Five Guys Burgers and Fries	623 E. Grand River Ave.	
Georgio's Pizza	120 Charles St.	
Georgio's Pizza (Temp Closed)	1010 E Grand River Ave.	
Grand Traverse Pie Company	1403 E. Grand River Ave.	
Harper's Restaurant & Brewpub (Club 131)	131 Albert Ave.	Y
Hopcat	300 Grove St.	Y
Insomnia Cookies	602 E. Grand River Ave.	
Jersey Mike's Subs	551 E. Grand River Ave.	
Jimmy Johns Gourmet Sandwiches	643 E. Grand River Ave.	
Landshark Restaurant	101 E. Grand River Ave.	Y
Leo's Coney Island	333 Albert Ave.	
Los Tres Amigos	1227 E. Grand River Ave.	Y
Lou & Harry's	211 E. Grand River Ave.	Y
McDonald's	1024 E. Grand River Ave.	
Menna's Joint	115 Albert Ave.	

<b>Business Name</b>	<b>Business Address</b>	<b>Licensed</b>
Mitten Raised	1331 E. Grand River Ave.	
No Thai	403 E. Grand River Ave.	
Noodles & Company	101 E. Grand River Ave.	
Omi Sushi	210 M.A.C. Ave.	Y
P.T. O'Malley's	210 Abbot Rd.	Y
Panda Express	439 E. Grand River Ave.	
Peanut Barrel Restaurant	521 E. Grand River Ave.	Y
Peking Express	611 E. Grand River Ave.	Y
Pho Vietnamese	350 Albert Ave.	
Pita Pit	219 E. Grand River Ave.	
Poke Lab	245 Ann St.	
Potbelly Sandwich Works	233 E. Grand River Ave.	
Punk Taco/ Cosmos	1351 E. Grand River Ave.	Y
Qdoba	1127 E Grand River Ave.	
Rice Kitchen	551 E. Grand River Ave.	
Rick's American Café	224 Abbot Rd.	Y
Riviera Café (The)	231 M.A.C. Ave.	Y
Sapporo	317 M.A.C. Ave.	
Starbucks Coffee	401 E. Grand River Ave.	
Starbucks Coffee	1141 E. Grand River Ave.	
Subway	1100 E. Grand River Ave.	
Sushi Go	553 E. Grand River Ave.	
SushiYa	529 E. Grand River Ave.	
Tabooli	515 W. Grand River Ave.	
Taco Bell	601 E. Grand River Ave.	
Tamaki Sushi Wraps	1381 E. Grand River Ave.	
Tin Can Bar	313 E. Grand River Ave.	Y
Toaste	1385 E. Grand River Ave.	
Tropical Smoothie Café	1201 E. Grand River Ave.	
Unicha	111 Division St.	
Wings Over East Lansing	1391 E. Grand River Ave.	

Appendix B – DDA Map

