

CITY OF NORTHVILLE
OUTDOOR DINING ORDINANCE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Hours of Operation** – City staff is recommending that the hours of operation included in the Ordinance remain the same as the existing ordinance to avoid confusion and limit hours of operation. The Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC) sets the hours of operation from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m., Monday through Sunday. City staff contacted MLCC to determine if the city can deviate from MLCC hours of operation. City Attorney Tony Chubb has advised staff that the city can set more restrictive hours of operation for outdoor dining. The hours in the proposed ordinance keep the hours of operation the same.
2. **Designee** – The term designee was defined in the Ordinance at the request of City Council and residents providing input at the February 22nd City Council meeting. The definition for designee is “a person selected or designated to carry out the duty or role if the City Manager is unavailable.
3. **Traffic Concerns** - Several traffic studies have been conducted over the past 3 years to develop strategies to mitigate traffic conflicts. One study dealt with both vehicular traffic and pedestrian traffic. Another study dealt with connectivity and mobility. A plan for implementation of the study recommendations has been developed and improvements are being phased in. Information from the studies is not part of the Outdoor Dining Ordinance.
4. **Closure Dates** – In April of 2023 Northville City Council voted to close both Main and Center Street to vehicular traffic from late April through early November, as well as close it intermittently for special events from early November through late April. The proposed changes to the Outdoor Dining Ordinance reflect this action.

In addition, to allow establishments to take advantage of good weather, operation of an Outdoor Dining area is permitted prior to May 1st and after November 1st on a day-to-day basis subject to restrictions. These restrictions include use of sidewalks only, valid permit, daily removal and storage.

5. **Fire Pits** – The proposed ordinance allows for the use of propane fire pits within the designated service areas. The fire pits must be monitored during hours of operation by the permit holder and may not be wood burning. The wood burning fire pits create smoke, soot, and odor that impacts products and services of adjacent businesses. In addition, the Fire Department recommended propane only fire pits as they are safer than wood fire pits and eliminate the risk of sparks or unpredictable fire flames.
6. **Rooftop Dining** – The proposed ordinance applies to public property only and not the rooftops of private property. MLCC and the Planning Commission’s site plan approval process regulate rooftop dining.

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7. **ADA compliance** – The proposed ordinance must comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the applicable sections of Chapter 11 of the most recent adopted version of the Michigan Building Code pertaining to outdoor seating and accessibility which incorporates ADA compliance requirements.
8. **Post their MLCC or Wayne County permits** – Permits issued by both Wayne County and the MLCC are required to be prominently displayed in the licensed premises.
9. **Food trucks** – Currently the City’s Fees, Fines and Penalties schedule includes a \$30 annual permit fee for all food trucks operating in the city. Food trucks currently only operate as part of a special event. The Outdoor Dining Ordinance does not apply to food trucks.
10. **Design Standards** – There are currently no design standards for outdoor dining.
11. **Social District** –The governing body of a local governmental unit may designate a Social District within its jurisdiction. Qualified licensees within the Social District, and that have been approved for and issued a Social District Permit, may sell alcoholic liquor (beer, wine, mixed spirit drink, spirits, or mixed drinks) on their licensed premises to customers who may then consume the alcoholic liquor within the commons area of the Social District. The social district area can operate with the roads open or closed to vehicular traffic. The two terms are often incorrectly used. The Social district is larger than the street closures and includes 17 restaurants. The Social District hours of operation are from 12:00 pm to 10:00 pm Monday to Sunday. See social district map below.

