



# SUGGESTED GUIDELINES

## Design Review Board

*The Suggested Design Guidelines for Downtown Holland have been created to provide direction to those seeking approval for a private improvement project falling under the purview of the Downtown Design Review Board (DRB) and is intended to be a complimentary document to the Downtown Holland Standards Manual. These guidelines are meant to serve as a tool for property owners, design professionals, architects and others involved in modifying the design elements of any downtown building and/or nearby property.*

*The City of Holland's Downtown Development Authority established the DRB in 1993 with the intent of ensuring that new or updated design elements are consistent with the architectural style and character of the downtown while encouraging the creativity that enables the downtown to remain a unique and vibrant place. The role of the DRB is to review and advise on all signs, awnings, canopies, sidewalk/outdoor cafes, as well as many other design elements in the C-3 zoning district. The DRB consists of six (6) members and meets monthly to review all applications. At least three (3) members are Board members of the Downtown Development Authority and, if available, up to three (3) members of the DRB are design professionals.*

## SIGNAGE

Signage is a vital element of Holland's downtown environment, capable of providing scale, color and interest to the streetscape. When a sign is in scale with its architectural surroundings, appropriately placed and well designed, it can provide a positive economic effect to not only the business but the whole of downtown.



When the streetscape is cluttered with too many poorly designed or placed signs, the resulting visual confusion reduces the sign's effectiveness. Due to the unique qualities of each structure and business downtown, varying signage types will be appropriate according to the character of the building and the tenant's needs. Design criteria for reviewing signage include scale, number, placement, color and illumination. All sign applicants are required to provide all the pertinent information requested on the application.

***The following signs are permitted in the C-3 District with Design Review Board (DRB) approval:***

### Wall Signs

**A sign affixed flat to a wall**

**Size:** The maximum area of wall signs may not exceed one square foot of sign area for each one foot of building length of the wall upon which the sign is to be located. The DRB may approve additional signs or sign area where the building has multiple ground floor tenants; where the character, placement and size satisfy otherwise applicable compatibility standards. The total signs on a wall shall not exceed 64 square feet.



**Location:** Wall signs must be placed below the sill of a building's second floor windows. The DRB may waive this limitation if it finds that the proposed sign placed at a higher location on a building will be compatible with the character and design of the building on which it is placed and compatible with other legal and conforming signage both on the building and on adjoining properties. Wall signs shall be contained within the boundaries of a wall.

### Projecting Signs

A two-sided sign that projects off the face of the building at a 90 degree angle

**Size and projection:** Signs shall not exceed six square feet in area per sign. Signs shall not project more than 36 inches from the face of the building or wall. Projecting signs shall maintain a clearance of eight feet from the sidewalk.



**Location:** One per building wall which faces a street or parking lot. A building having multiple commercial tenants is permitted more than one projecting sign on a street or parking lot frontage provided that the number of projecting signs does not exceed one for each 25 feet of frontage. Signs shall be located below the window sill of the second floor window.

### Awnings, Canopies and Marquees

A retractable or fixed shelter constructed of materials on a supporting framework that project from the exterior wall of a building

**Projection:** An awning or canopy shall not project more than four feet beyond the face of a building.

**Location:** The awning or canopy shall not extend over the vertical columns on either side of the first floor level. Awnings shall maintain a clearance of eight feet from the sidewalk.



**Signage on awning, canopy or marquee:** One sign is permitted on a face of an awning, canopy, or marquee. The total sign area shall not exceed two square feet for each linear foot of street or parking lot frontage of the wall upon which the awning, canopy, or marquee is located. Signs shall be affixed flat to the awning, canopy, or marquee.

### Freestanding, Monument and Directional Signs

Signs independent of any building or structure

**Size:** The sign shall be no greater than 32 square feet with a height restriction of 6 feet from the grade. Signs in a specified area within the C-3 district (outside the



area defined and enclosed by the centerlines of 7th Street, Lincoln Avenue, 9th Street and Pine Avenue) are allowed up to 36 square feet with a height restriction up to 9 feet.

**Location:** One sign allowed per parcel. Signs shall be set back at the minimum building setback and not obstruct pedestrian movement.

### Street Banners

A long strip of cloth bearing a design and hung in public space

**Size:** Banners are a standard 30 inches wide by 94 inches high and made of sunbrella or comparable material. Banners are to be design only (no text).

**Location:** Currently 70 utility poles configured for banners located downtown. With the exception of Tulip Time Inc. banners, only DDA owned banners are allowed downtown.



### Murals

A design or representation painted or drawn on a wall which may contain promotional or commercial advertising within the City Ordinances pertaining to the C-3 district

**Size:** Murals containing any representation of the services provided by the applicant are considered signs and must follow the size allowance for wall signs. Decorative murals must be reviewed by the DRB for aesthetic reasons.

**Business owners in the C-3 district are allowed free-standing moveable signs, "open" flags and inside window signs without DRB approval. Please contact the Downtown office directly for application requirements regarding these types of signs.**



### Checklist for Application Submittal:

- Application completely filled out, signed and accompanied by application fee.
- Scaled, detailed drawing showing the proposed location of requested signs or outdoor dining area and additional design elements being reviewed by the DRB. **The renderings are very important to the process and the application will not be accepted without them.** If you are having difficulty with this step, please inform the Downtown office and we will supply you with examples of what is required.
- Samples of colors.
- Current photographs of what the business looks like without the new sign, awning or café addition.
- If applying for an outdoor or sidewalk café, photographs of tables and chairs.
- In addition a representative of your business or sign company **must** be present at the Design Review Board meeting to explain the proposed changes and answer any questions the board may have.
- Applications can be found online at <http://bit.ly/downtownapplications>

**The following guidelines for signs are recommended by the DRB:**

## All Signs

- › Sign message must be designed to fit properly into the sign location. Modifications to logos and corporate identifiers may be required to fit aesthetically and proportionally in the space provided.
- › Sign fonts shall be selected to provide both clarity and artistic integrity.
- › Sign attachment to the building should respect the materials and design of the building and be clearly shown on submittals.

## Sign Lighting

- › Back-lit, halo-lit illumination or reverse channel letters with halo illumination are highly encouraged for lighting purposes. Such signs convey a subtle and attractive appearance.
- › Lights should be arranged so that the light source is directed away from passerby. The light source should not shine into adjacent property or cause glare for motorists and pedestrians.
- › Signs that use blinking, flashing or oscillating lights are not permitted. This includes electronic message board signs.

## Wall Signs

- › Wall signs shall be mounted in locations that respect the design of a building, including the arrangement of bays and openings.
- › Signs should not obscure windows and ornamental features. Typically wall signs should be centered on horizontal surfaces (over a storefront opening).
- › Wall signs should be designed to be compatible with the storefront in scale, proportion and color.



## Awnings and Canopies

- › Awnings and canopies must be permanently attached to buildings.
- › The minimum height of awnings shall be 8 feet from the lowest point of the sidewalk.
- › Awnings shall be designed to project over individual window and door opening and not project as a single continuous feature extending over masonry features or arches.



› Awnings with a solid color are preferred. Striped awnings may be appropriate for some buildings without ornamental facades. Striped awnings with highly contrasting, bright colors may be visually glaring and inappropriate.

## Projecting Signs

- › Projecting signs should not be mounted above second floor window sill in multi-storied buildings.
- › Projecting signs should provide a vertical clearance of 8 feet along pedestrian areas.
- › Projecting signs shall be oriented to pedestrians passing on the sidewalk in front of buildings rather than to automobiles.
- › Mounting hardware should be an attractive and integral part of the sign design.



## SIDEWALK AND OUTDOOR CAFÉS

Sidewalk and outdoor cafes help bring life to the street adding value and vitality to downtown Holland. The Design Review Board (DRB) is responsible for reviewing the design of sidewalk and outdoor cafes. While reviewing and evaluating sidewalk and outdoor cafes, the DRB places importance on comfortable, enjoyable and aesthetically pleasing public and private spaces. The purpose of these guidelines is to help clarify and provide standards for sidewalk and outdoor café uses to enhance the quality and safety of the pedestrian experience downtown. All café applicants are required to provide all pertinent information requested on the application.

### Sidewalk café

Any accumulation of tables, chairs, and other appurtenances related to and used for the sale of food and drink on public sidewalk property, not fully enclosed by a structure.

**Sidewalk café placement:** The tables, chairs, and other appurtenances of the cafe should be placed in a way that they do not hinder safe pedestrian use of the sidewalks and do not block ingress or egress from any building.



Sidewalk cafes downtown must have an unobstructed sidewalk aisle of a minimum of eight feet; however, the Design Review Board has the authority to reduce this dimension to no less than six feet when the Board determines that a lesser clear dimension is adequate and appropriate given the volume of pedestrian traffic; the placement, nature and extent of intrusion of streetscape elements and furnishings; the location of building entrances or gathering places; the location and volume of activity of waiting areas for business patrons; or other similar factors.

## Outdoor Café

Any accumulation of tables, chairs, and other appurtenances related to and used for the sale of food and drink on private property, not fully enclosed by a structure.

**Outdoor café placement:** The tables, chairs, and other appurtenances of the outdoor café are placed on the same parcel where a licensed food service establishment is located.



Modification of streetscape elements, for example removal of city planter beds, to accommodate cafes are not automatically approved and must follow a formal review process as described in the Downtown Holland Streetscape Modification Policy (October 2010).

**The following guidelines for cafés are recommended by the DRB:**

### Flower Boxes and Planters

All cafés are strongly encouraged to add visual appeal to the property by installing potted flowers and plants. The DRB is available to make recommendations for enhancements. All installations shall be moveable and not permanently fixed to the city sidewalks. In some instances the DRB may approve a café contingent upon the installation of planters and/or flower boxes.



### Sidewalk Cafés Serving Alcohol

The Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC) requires that sidewalk cafes serving alcohol be well defined and clearly marked. Currently the MLCC does not have a rule stating that special fencing, railing or roping be used. It is the applicant's responsibility to be aware of all current MLCC requirements.

**According to the Downtown Holland Streetscape Modification Policy (October 2010):**

"The City's Ordinance covering sidewalk cafes that also sell alcohol follows a similar process as other sidewalk cafes, and also typically includes a fence or other enclosure that is seasonal and removed over the winter months."

The DRB strongly encourages the use of railing or fencing to physically separate patrons from pedestrian traffic and add a more structured appearance to the café. The materials used to define the boundaries must meet with DRB approval. The DRB may approve the use of flower boxes or planters to define the boundaries of the café seating if the following conditions are met:

› To avoid blocking patron's vision while seated the combined height of the planters and live plants shall not exceed 4 feet from the sidewalk grade.

- › The boxes or planters shall generally be no greater than 2 1/2 feet in height and no wider than 2 feet at the base.
- › Flower boxes and planters shall be portable and made of durable attractive material. Such as but not limited to...concrete, brick, iron, etc...

## Umbrellas

Fabric umbrellas are allowed at sidewalk and outdoor cafes as long as they are used primarily to provide shade or cover customers at a dining table.

***All umbrellas are required to be reviewed by the DRB and must comply with the following:***

- › When open the umbrella must still allow for the minimum pedestrian clearance.
- › Umbrellas should not have any advertisement other than the café's logo or name and should be consistent with the business signage and/or branding.
- › Colors and materials of the umbrellas shall be reviewed by the DRB.



## Trash

- › All café operators shall be responsible for the proper maintenance of the café area at all times, including properly disposing of all trash generated by the operation and keeping tables cleared.
- › If a café operator is interested in purchasing an additional trash receptacle they must work with the Downtown Staff to make sure the receptacle follows the established Standard and is placed in the appropriate location.

***The suggested guidelines are intended as a reference tool and all applicants are required to comply with all current State of Michigan building and fire codes, Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC) requirements and City Ordinances pertaining to the C-3 district.***

## Questions or comments? Contact:

City of Holland, Downtown Development Authority  
150 West 8th Street, Holland, MI 49423  
616.355.1050  
dda@cityofholland.com  
www.downtownholland.com