

City of Plymouth Outdoor Dining Area Policy 2024-2028

Revised and adopted by the City Commission on: October 16, 2023

History of Outdoor Dining Area(s)

On Monday, May 18, 2020, the Plymouth City Commission passed a resolution authorizing City Administration to make additional public space available for use by dining establishments to expand their service area within the scope of the rules and regulations of the State of Michigan. In addition, the resolution designates public spaces in front of or on the side of a business as space available for use; this would include parking spaces.

In 2021, the City of Plymouth, once again, allowed dining establishments the ability to use public spaces adjacent to their business, including parking spaces for patio extensions.

In 2022, the City of Plymouth updated the program to reflect the changes in health orders, restrictions, etc. for the 2022 season. The city took feedback from the businesses in its creation of the 2022 City of Plymouth Patio Extension Program.

At the August 15, 2022, City Commission meeting, the City Commission authorized the extension of the 2022 program through the 2023 patio season. While the City of Plymouth continues its discussions on potential long term “parklets,” one idea that has been discussed by the business community related to outdoor dining and patio extensions is that of dining platforms.

Fees and Permits

1. All proposed Outdoor Dining Area(s) owners/operators shall submit an annual application depicting the location and layout of the outdoor dining area to the Community Development Department for approval. Approval of the application shall be subject to compliance with this policy and all applicable building codes.
2. Fees for Outdoor Dining Area(s) shall consist of an application fee and a fee based on the square footage of area used for the outdoor dining area, fees shall be determined by resolution of the City Commission.
3. Before receiving an Outdoor Dining Area permit, the applicant shall pay all required fees.
4. Prior to issuance of an Outdoor Dining Area permit, the City’s finance department shall verify that there are no outstanding fees owed to the City by the person or entity requesting an Outdoor Dining Area permit. An Outdoor Dining Area permit will not be issued until all outstanding debts to the City of Plymouth are paid in full.
5. It is the responsibility of the owner to maintain adherence to federal (including ADA requirements), state (including Michigan Liquor Control Commission), and local regulations. The city will not accept responsibility for any damage whether direct or implied because of the construction, installation, or operation of the outdoor dining platforms.

6. All outdoor dining area operations shall indemnify and hold the City free, clear, and harmless from any and all claims arising out of the operation of the outdoor dining area. The City shall be added as a named insured on the application/operator's general liability insurance policy and provide the City with a copy of the certificate of insurance. The operator shall carry insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 per person, per incident, for general and product liability and have umbrella coverage in the amount of \$1,000,000.
7. The City shall have the right to prohibit the operation of an outdoor dining area because of anticipated or actual problems or conflicts in the use of the business. Some problems may arise from, but are not limited to, festivals and similar events, parades, or repairs to the street, sidewalk, or utilities within the public right of way. To the maximum extent possible, the outdoor dining area owner will be given prior written notice of any time period during which the operation of the outdoor dining area may be impacted.

Construction

1. To provide the most flexibility and provide options for the food servicing establishments, the outdoor dining platform may be purchased as a kit from a vendor or constructed using raw materials so long as either option conforms to the guidelines listed below. This section does not attempt to address each and every option available but provides reasonable framework for the establishment to reference while planning and submitting the plan to the city for consideration and approval.
2. The dining platform structure must be constructed of quality materials, such as pressure treated wood, or wood composite, vinyl, metal, etc. The floor of the dining platform must be constructed out of a composite material or wood (such as Ipe) in a neutral color such as brown or grey and reflect the characteristics of the restaurant or food establishment. The floor may also be constructed out of stone or tile in the same neutral colors as exemplified above.
3. Dining platform railings must be constructed of a rigid material (wrought iron, cast aluminum, steel, stained/painted wood, composite, etc.) and be black or neutral; and not solid walls (unless it is a piece designed to hold plantings). Rails must meet specifications as defined by the MLCC for liquor serving establishments and any pertinent building codes; this would include height requirements. Rails must be attached securely to the platform and cannot be loose standing.
4. Dining furniture must be consistent with the quality and character of commonly found outdoor dining area furniture. It must be durable and weather resistant.
5. Umbrellas must be constructed of canvas/synthetic canvas material and be aesthetically compatible with the color scheme of the front building façade and contain no logo or advertising. Umbrellas when open shall be fully contained within the dining platform area and shall not hang over into any traffic lane and/or sidewalk area.
6. A pergola may be constructed as part of the outdoor dining area. The materials for the pergola must be consistent with the materials for the construction of the outdoor dining area. The maximum height of the pergola measured from the top of the platform to the top of the pergola shall not exceed nine feet (9').

7. Lighting in the style of tabletop or accessory lighting such as “string lights” will be allowed on the outdoor dining platform.
8. Each outdoor dining platform shall contain a form of planter with live planting(s) maintained through the patio season (October 31). Planters with live plantings can be incorporated into the wall structure of the patio or be added on/hanging to the railing. Pots or other containers must blend into the planting areas and not simply have a stand-alone pot placed inside a piece of wall structure. Planting areas must account for 25% of the perimeter measurement of the patio area. For example, if the perimeter of the outdoor dining area measures 100’, the planters must account for 25’. Please note that in the event the planters are hanging on the railing, the spacing will be measured from the edge of the planter to the nearest obstruction where applicable.
9. The outdoor dining areas may be installed during the month of March to allow for inspection by the MLCC; however, they may not be in use for patrons until April.

Outdoor Dining Area Location and Placement

A dining platform is an option available to food serving establishments with the following conditions:

1. A dining platform is an option for outdoor dining areas and is defined as a platform operated by an existing restaurant, bar, or other food serving establishment which sells food and beverage for immediate consumption, located on the adjacent parking space(s), alleys, streets, or other public property areas, for patrons and other persons, subject to design guidelines.
2. The dining platform must only be accessible from the sidewalk area and not from the street. The platform area shall use readily removable tables, chairs, umbrellas, railings, and planters. The perimeter must be secured by a railing and open to the air, except for any coverage provided by umbrellas or pergolas.
3. Outdoor dining area facilities may extend in front of adjacent businesses if written consent is obtained, annually, from the affected adjacent property owners. If the parking space in front of the applicant’s frontage exceeds the width of the building, the applicant may request the use of the entire parking space.
4. The outdoor dining area may not encroach upon the area(s) that transition between the parking space(s) and the crosswalks, so as to not negatively impact sight lines for crosswalks and/or Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons or other crosswalk elements. This is typically the area where the curb transitions from parallel to the roadway to a diagonal that leads toward the crosswalk. **In addition, this area also extends from the roadway across the sidewalk to the building and may not be encroached upon by an outdoor dining area. This is designed to allow more walkability in and near the crosswalks.**
5. An inspection of all outdoor dining area(s) by the Community Development Department is required before opening the premises for use.
6. Minimum clearances from the building to the outdoor dining area must be maintained during the patio season. They can be found in the table below:

Street	Boundary	Min. Distance from Bldg. to Dining Area
Ann Arbor Trail	Main St. to Union/Deer St.	6 Feet
Ann Arbor Trail	Main St. to Harvey St.	6 Feet

Forest Ave	Ann Arbor Trail to Wing St.	6 Feet
Main St.	Penniman to Ann Arbor Trail	7 Feet
Penniman	Main St. to Harvey St.	6 Feet
Starkweather	Farmer to train tracks	6 Feet

In the event that the food service establishment owns, leases, rents, etc. the building that has private sidewalk of no less than 18" that adjoins the city sidewalk, said food service establishment will be allowed to install outdoor dining area continuous from their private property sidewalk to include city sidewalk near the building and not be required to move the outdoor dining area away from the building. The minimum distance requirement would then be in effect as a measurement from the back of the curb to the beginning of their outdoor dining area.

7. The dining platform must leave no less than a two-foot (2') clearance offset on each end contained within the footprint of the designated parking spaces being used for the patio extension from adjacent parking spaces. A two-foot (2') clearance offset will apply to the side that faces the traffic.
8. A sidewalk only outdoor dining area must leave no less than a one- and one-half foot (1 ½') clearance from the top of the curb to the beginning of the outdoor dining area to allow for the opening of a car door.
9. The dining platform must be flush with the sidewalk or top of curb level if only using the on-street area for the platform option. There may be no more than a ½ inch horizontal space between the curb/sidewalk and the edge of the dining platform.
10. The outdoor dining area may be built in a continuous fashion that combines sidewalk and on street areas. The platform must provide a flat surface and match the slope of the existing street or 2%, whichever is less.
11. The dining platform shall not interfere with any public service facility or utility, such as telephone pole, light pole, traffic signal, tree, planter, mailbox, sign pole, mailbox, bench, planter, fire hydrant, etc. These elements may be incorporated into the design element of the platform as they are permanent fixtures in the city but will not be removed or relocated.
12. The dining platform must be designed and constructed in such a way to allow for the flow of storm water to run adjacent to the curb unobstructed.
13. The dining platform cannot be anchored into the street or existing curb.

The maximum number of outdoor dining seats in an outdoor dining area will be determined by a formula: The square footage divided by 8.5. For example: If the patio is 200-square-feet, divided by 8.5, the maximum number of seats is 24.

Operation and Maintenance

1. The maintenance of the dining platform shall be the responsibility of the business owner including, but not limited to surface treatment and cleaning, litter control, rodent control, sweeping, and snow & ice removal. The sidewalk and public property shall be kept neat and clean and free from any substance that may cause damage to the sidewalk or public property (including parking spaces) or cause pedestrian injury.
2. Dining platforms must remain clear of litter, food scraps, and soiled dishes at all times. This includes areas on, around, next to, or underneath the platform. In addition, the outdoor dining area must remain clear of plates, cups, utensils, accoutrements, etc. when the outdoor dining platform is outside regular business hours. Chairs, tables, umbrellas, etc. must be kept contained and secured in the outdoor dining area and organized within reason at the end of each service day.
3. All alcoholic beverages to be served in an outdoor dining area shall be prepared within the existing restaurant, and alcoholic beverages shall only be served to patrons seated at tables. The operator of the outdoor dining area shall take all necessary action to procure the appropriate license(s) or permit(s) from the MLCC to serve alcoholic beverages on the dining platform and shall comply with all other laws and ordinances concerning the serving of alcoholic beverages in the state of Michigan.
4. The exterior of the premises shall be kept in a clean, orderly, and maintained condition. Sidewalks shall be cleaned daily with water by the outdoor dining area operator to prevent buildup of dirt and grease. Each establishment with an outdoor dining area must sweep the frontage sidewalk clear of cigarette butts and garbage during hours of operation and following the closure of the outdoor dining area for the evening. No remnants of cigarette butts or trash will be visible outside the establishment after closing.
5. Containers for cigarette butts must be made available to patrons outside each establishment with an outdoor dining area. The containers, free standing or attached to private property, must be located directly adjacent to the establishment, and meet the standards and be approved by the Downtown Development Authority staff. No unauthorized containers, coffee cans or other receptacles are allowed.
6. Outdoor dining areas shall be permitted to operate for the period of April 1 to November 1 only and may be used only during operation hours of the applying establishment. Installation of the outdoor dining areas are allowed, contingent upon city approval, during the month of March to allow for pertinent inspections prior to service beginning in April.
7. For liquor serving establishments, security cameras must be mounted on private property to give adequate coverage of the outdoor dining area. The specifications are attached and can be changed as technology changes. All cameras must have the approval of the Police Chief before being installed. That includes both the number of cameras needed and the specifications of the cameras to be installed. Each day's video recording must be saved for at least seven days. Upon request, establishments must make video available to the Police Department for investigations within 48 hours of the request. Failure to do so WILL result in immediate suspension of the outdoor dining area, AND revocation of the Outdoor Dining Area permit for the remainder of the season.
8. Outdoor dining areas shall be allowed to continue service until 11:00 pm, Sunday through Wednesday, and be closed and clear at 11:30 pm. Outdoor dining areas shall be allowed to continue service until 12:00am (Midnight) on Thursday, Friday and Saturday and be closed and clear at 12:30am.

9. All food preparation shall be performed inside the premises.
10. Establishments with an outdoor dining area are only allowed to store and secure the number of seats allowed per establishment, tables, and propane heaters each night. At the end of business, tables and chairs can be stacked against the wall, left standing in place or stored inside the establishment. Additional property, not limited to but including chairs, tables, cleaning materials, are not allowed to be stored outside during or after outdoor dining hours.
11. Each establishment with an outdoor dining area on city property must have a 36-inch high by 24-inch-wide sign attached to the fencing and/or the entrance of the outdoor dining area, noticeable to all patrons that reads:
“Local City & State Ordinances for Outdoor Public Seating
1. No smoking in the patio
2. All patrons must be seated in the patio
3. No pets allowed on the inside of the patio
4. All alcohol must be brought across the sidewalk by an (establishment name) employee
City Ordinances Pertaining to Hours of Operation
Sunday-Wednesday
The last call will be at 11 p.m. and all patrons must be inside by 11:30 p.m.
Thursday-Saturday
Last call will be at 12 a.m. and all patrons must be inside by 12:30 a.m.”
12. Outdoor dining areas shall abide by the City’s Noise Ordinance.

General Regulations

1. Failure to comply with all state, county and municipal laws and this policy shall result in the immediate revocation of the outdoor dining area by the city.
2. All denials of applications and revocations of said authority to operate may be appealed to the City Commission, whose decision is final. (Note: The use of public right of way is subject solely to the control of the City Commission.)
3. Appeals of revocations shall stay further proceedings and the applicant shall be permitted to continue the outdoor dining area operation pending a decision by the City Commission. Provided, if a violation poses an immediate danger to the public’s health, safety, or general welfare, the City Manager or his designee may order the suspension of all outdoor dining area operations pending a hearing and the applicant shall cease carrying on such activities pending such hearing.
4. All applicants, prior to being issued an Outdoor Dining Area permit, shall enter into a written contract whereby the City shall “permit” the operation and the owner/applicant shall acknowledge the conditions and the City’s authority to revoke the permit upon failure to comply with any of the conditions set forth herein.

Security System Requirements (Liquor Serving Establishments)

Specifications:

1. Storage capacity must be capable of storing seven (7) days of captured video footage.
2. The system must have the ability to transfer data to an external drive/source.
3. All new camera installations must be of 4K resolution quality.
4. A camera’s night vision feature must be capable of capturing 100 feet out from the camera.

Fee Schedule

Application Fee:	\$500.00 per season
Application Fee:	\$250.00 per season non-liquor serving establishments with three or fewer tables.
Outdoor Dining Area Usage Fee:	\$2.50 per square foot per season for 2024. In subsequent years, the cost will increase by the annual rate of inflation or 3%, whichever is less.