



# **STEPS TO STARTING A BUSINESS IN DOWNTOWN FERNDALE**

1. Contact the Ferndale Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Executive Director, Cristina Sheppard-Decius at 248-546-1632 or [cristina@downtownferndale.com](mailto:cristina@downtownferndale.com) to discuss business idea/plan and available properties.
2. After contacting the landlord(s) of the property(s) that fits your needs, view the available property and collect the following information from the landlord in order to fill out a Zoning Determination: owner's name; owner's address; available property address; and owner's phone number.
  - a. We recommend hiring a commercial inspector to inspect the property you are planning to lease and have the inspector note any possible code violations and improvements needed for your business and building. This is extremely important to have done prior to signing a lease agreement with your future landlord to determine who will be responsible for certain improvements.
3. Come to City Hall to fill out a **Zoning Determination Request (ZDR)** form at the Building Department (lower level). You will also need to describe your business and products in a few short sentences on the Zoning Determination form.
4. **If zoning is approved**, then you either follow one of two tracks:
  - a. **If you do not need or plan to renovate the property significantly (ie: only paint, carpeting, etc. that do not require permits) then proceed to the City Clerk's Office (upper level of City Hall) to fill out a Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) application and submit fee (\$200).** Four inspectors (Building, Plumbing, Electrical and HVAC) will inspect your property and you will need to schedule that with the Building Department after you have submitted your C of O fee.
  - b. **If you plan to renovate the property in a way that requires building plans, then proceed directly with drafting your building plans and bypass the Certificate of Occupancy application process.** Your permit and building plan fees are based on the amount of construction, which you can inquire with the Building Department on these costs.

**(If zoning is not approved**, contact the Board of Zoning Appeals by going to the City Clerk's Office for the proper paperwork. **Or** you may want to contact the DDA Executive Director to find another location in Downtown Ferndale.)

5. At the same time you pick up your ZDR approval, pick up an **Appearance Review Application** and contact the DDA Executive Director, Cristina Sheppard-Decius at 248-546-1632. An Appearance Review Application is required by anyone planning to do exterior improvements, renovations or changes to the building, including, but not limited to signage, paint, remodeling, windows, doors, façade, etc. Application is available online at [www.downtownferndale.com](http://www.downtownferndale.com).
6. Submit **Appearance Review Application** to DDA Office (149 W. Nine Mile) with appropriate attachments (i.e.: design plans, elevation, material samples) and \$100 fee for approval from Appearance Review Committee. (Refer to application guidelines for more information.) **DO NOT START ANY EXTERIOR CONSTRUCTION, PRINTING OF SIGNAGE, ETC. UNTIL APPROVAL IS GIVEN BY COMMITTEE.**
7. Ask the DDA Executive Director about the **BUILD program**, which is a reimbursement program for exterior work on properties in the DDA.
8. If there are improvements to be made that require a permit, such as building construction, electrical, plumbing and heating/cooling, please contact the Building Department for the proper application and process. Plans will be needed from a bonded contractor/vendor.
9. If the property is nearing completion, then proceed to the Building Department to schedule inspections for Building, Electrical, Plumbing and HVAC. (Four total inspectors).
10. Inspections are made on date(s) agreed with the Building Department. Cancellations are subject to a \$35 fee, unless Building Department is contacted before 9:00 a.m. the same day of inspection.
11. Notification of any violations will be sent to the applicant and property owner. Applicant has 30 days to correct violations. However, if more time is required, please contact the Building Department for an extension.
12. The **Certificate of Occupancy** will not be issued until all violations are corrected and reinspected by all of the inspectors listed on City Clerk's paperwork.
13. **DO NOT** start business until the Certificate of Occupancy is issued.

**Best of Luck with Your Business! Please make sure to visit the DDA Office or [www.downtownferndale.com](http://www.downtownferndale.com) for more information on how you can market your business and participate in the community!**

#### **FERNDALE DDA MISSION STATEMENT**

*The Ferndale DDA (Downtown Development Authority), a Main Street Oakland County community, is a non-profit public entity that is focused on the revitalization of Downtown Ferndale. Our mission is to create and sustain a diverse, distinctive and vibrant urban downtown district with small-town charm that serves a broad trade area including the Ferndale community, Metro Detroit area, and out-of-state and international visitors by providing support and leadership to the downtown business community, volunteers, residents, property owners, real estate and development professionals utilizing the Main Street Approach of economic development, design, promotions and organization.*