

LAFAYETTE RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

The Lafayette Riverfront Development District is a portion of Downtown Lafayette designated by Resolution 2004-01, Resolution 2006-12, Resolution 2017-17 and Resolution 2022-09 by the Lafayette Common Council. The State of Indiana permits restaurant owners or lessees in such areas to apply for a low-cost one, two, or three-way liquor license. This state provision does not apply to bars or saloons that do not serve a sufficient meal menu.

Lafayette's Riverfront Development Area covers parts of two areas in the Downtown that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Included are parts of the Downtown Lafayette Historic District and the Upper Main Street Historic District. The original Riverfront District started at mid-stream of the Wabash River in the west and went to 11th Street in the East. Since little development can take place due to the presence of the river and the adjoining railroad corridor, the State of Indiana permits the district to start at the first developable area which is generally considered to be east of the railroad corridor. From there, it runs on both sides of Main Street and beyond approximately 3,000 feet to 11th Street, as permitted by IC 7.1-3-20-16.1 (d)(2)(a). See the attached map for the location of the Lafayette Riverfront Development area.

To qualify as a restaurant a special space must be provided where food is served and paid for, without lodging. The space must accommodate at least 25 people being served at one time. The minimum food requirements include hot soups, hot sandwiches, coffee, milk, and soft drinks served in a sanitary manner as required by law.

Numerous types of restaurants have qualified for Riverfront development licenses in Downtown Lafayette. Examples include: fine dining restaurants, brew pubs, sandwich shops, a cheese & wine shop, an ice cream shop, steakhouses, and ethnic cuisine restaurants. Several have been operating successfully for many years.

While any location in the Riverfront Development area is acceptable, preference is given to restaurants wanting to locate in or near the Arts and Entertainment District, designated by the HyettPalma Study. This area is generally from the alley north of Main Street to the alley South of Main Street, beginning at the alley between 4th and 5th Streets and extending to 11th Street.

There are two final considerations if you are thinking about opening a restaurant and wanting a Riverfront license. First, the license is not transferable. If the business closes or changes ownership, the license expires. The new owner must acquire a new license. Second, a letter of support from the Mayor of Lafayette is required with your application to the state for a license. This letter can be pursued through contact with the Lafayette Economic Development Department at 765-807-1090.

For further information on how to qualify a restaurant for this low cost license contact:

John Collier, Assistant Director of Economic Development at 765-807-1090 or at

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