

# Opening a Business in the Leesburg Old and Historic District:

**WELCOME TO HISTORIC LEESBURG!** We are glad to have you and your new business in our historic downtown. The following is a list of helpful resources and information to assist business owners in understanding the historic area and caring for their historic buildings. Sensitive changes, together with appropriate maintenance and repair of historic structures, is essential to retaining the character of Leesburg's Old and Historic District.

## GETTING STARTED:

The Zoning Ordinance governs allowed uses on each property. Please check with our zoning staff to ensure your business is permissible. Zoning and building permits may be required for interior alterations to fit your use and any increase in water usage may require a public facilities permit (restaurants, salons, etc.). If you do not own your building, the property owner's signature will be required for all Town and County permits. Once a site has been selected, reach out to preservation staff to discuss potential changes and historic district requirements. Key things to consider:

- Underlying zoning regulations (uses, parking requirements, etc.)
- Any relevant easements, proffers or special conditions on the property
- Historic district regulations
- Outdoor dining requirements

## PRESERVATION STAFF CONTACTS:



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## CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS (COA):

- Approval is required for most exterior alterations in the Old and Historic District through the COA process.
  - This includes signs, changes in materials, demolition, awnings, and new construction, among others.
  - This does *not* include furniture, plantings, or interior alterations.
- Some applications qualify for administrative review while others require review by the Board of Architectural Review (BAR).
- COA applications are submitted online through eTRAKiT: [lee.csqrcloud.com/community-ettrakit/](http://lee.csqrcloud.com/community-ettrakit/)
- More information about this process is outlined on our website: [www.leesburgva.gov/preservation](http://www.leesburgva.gov/preservation)
- Additional zoning, engineering, and building permits may be required:
  - Zoning (use, proffers, permits): [permits@leesburgva.gov](mailto:permits@leesburgva.gov) or 703-771-2765
  - Engineering (stormwater, floodplain): [planintake@leesburgva.gov](mailto:planintake@leesburgva.gov) or 703-771-2765
  - Loudoun County Building & Development (permits): [bad@loudoun.gov](http://bad@loudoun.gov) or 703-771-0220
  - Utilities (public facilities permit, water and sewer): [bpayne@leesburgva.gov](mailto:bpayne@leesburgva.gov) or 703-771-2762



“In-kind” means the same material, dimension, detailing, and measurements as the existing.

### MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS:

Maintaining an historic building is essential to preserving the character of Leesburg, a vital business district and tourism destination for the Town. Maintenance and in-kind repairs do not typically require a COA whereas full replacement of an element will likely require review.

#### Major building elements (windows/doors/siding/roof):

- Secure buildings by ensuring all elements are in good condition.
  - Repair elements whenever possible.
  - When elements are beyond repair, submit a COA to replace in-kind.
- Do not paint unpainted buildings.
- Do not replace or change elements without approval.

#### Marquees, Awnings & Canopies:

- Material: Is fabric torn or wearing thin? Is rust present on metal? Is glass cracked?
- Water Control: Is fabric retaining or seeping water? Is water leaking through gaps or cracks?
- Fabric lasts approximately ten years and metal approximately twenty. Glass should last indefinitely.

#### Existing Signs:

- Ensure signs are hanging correctly and remain 7.5’ above any public sidewalks per Town Code.
- Material: are sign graphics fading, chipped, or deteriorating?

### NEW PROJECTS:

COAs are needed for all new signage and exterior construction projects to ensure architectural compatibility:

#### Alterations:

- Ensure alterations are compatible with the structure and could potentially be reversed in the future. Support the historic character of your individual building by preserving unique details.
- Use details found on historic examples within the district.
- Replicate historic details in dimension, proportion, and appearance where appropriate
- Use traditional materials

#### New Signage:

- Ensure projecting signs are 7.5’ above any public sidewalks.
- Ensure signs do not block building features like windows or trim details.
- Mount wall signs so they do not damage historic materials.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND CONTACTS:

- Business assistance team: [chooseleesburg.com/business-assistance-team](http://chooseleesburg.com/business-assistance-team)
- Guidelines: [leesburgva.gov/preservation](http://leesburgva.gov/preservation)
- Board of Architectural Review: [leesburgva.gov/bar](http://leesburgva.gov/bar)
- Economic Development (small business support): [www.chooseleesburg.com](http://www.chooseleesburg.com)
- Leesburg Movement: [facebook.com/leesburg.movement](https://facebook.com/leesburg.movement)



Your business may qualify for additional signs through the BAR process. Contact Staff for more info!