

DOWNTOWN MERCHANT HANDBOOK



ROTARY CENTENNIAL PLAZA & COURTHOUSE SQUARE
DOWNTOWN HOUMA, LA

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SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the heart of Downtown Houma! Whether you're a shop owner, restaurateur, professional, or creative entrepreneur, this handbook outlines the policies, procedures, and opportunities that support businesses operating in and around **Rotary Centennial Plaza** and the **Courthouse Square**.

From managing outdoor seating to hosting live music, this guide ensures you're equipped to operate smoothly while contributing to the vibrancy of Downtown Houma.



SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS

Courthouse Square: The public green space and surrounding sidewalks near the Terrebonne Parish Courthouse, often used for civic and cultural events.

Rotary Centennial Plaza: The public space along Belanger Street between Grinage and Church Streets, including the adjoining sidewalks and curbs.

Plaza Merchant: A business that holds a valid commercial occupational license, has an active certificate of occupancy, and operates within the Houma Historic District or directly faces Rotary Centennial Plaza.

Parking Areas for Downtown Merchant Customers: Merchants are encouraged to inform their customers on all available parking. The following lot is **designated for merchant customer parking**:

- Parking lot: Located at 7842 Main Street, bordered by Main Street (north), Belanger Street (south), Church Street (east), and adjacent commercial land (west).

Additionally, there are a number of **public parking lots in the surrounding area**. Refer to section 18 for a detailed look at all available parking options.



SECTION 3. OPERATING AS A DOWNTOWN MERCHANT

Requirements for Downtown Businesses:

- Maintain an active occupational license and Certificate of Occupancy.
- Keep storefronts and sidewalks clear and clean.
- Avoid placing permanent structures on public property.
- Coordinate with Parish staff for outdoor activities and special events.
- Ensure ADA-compliant access to all entryways.

SECTION 4. ROTARY CENTENNIAL PLAZA

Ordinance No. 9520, adopted October 11, 2023

General Rules:

- No loitering between the hours of **2 a.m. and 6 a.m.**
- Plaza must remain **open to the public**, even during permitted events.

Prohibited Items and Activities:

- Alcohol not purchased from a licensed plaza merchant
- Alcohol consumption during the prohibited hours of **2 a.m. and 6 p.m.**
- Glass containers
- Coolers exceeding 14 quarts
- Cooking apparatuses
- Motorized vehicles
- Bicycles or skateboards
- Firearms
- Amplified sounds

Violations:

- Misdemeanor offense
- Up to **\$500 fine** and/or **30 days** jail time



SECTION 5. SIDEWALK & PATIO SERVICE GUIDELINES

Businesses facing the plaza may treat the sidewalk directly in front of their business as a patio area for table service, outdoor seating, and/or a display of movable equipment or inventory.

Guidelines:

- Patios must not extend into the plaza (Belanger Street)
- Permanent fixtures are prohibited.
- Merchants use this space at their own risk.
- ADA access and pedestrian flow must be maintained.

Aesthetics:

Looking to create a cohesive look in your patio area? Our plaza furniture includes black metal benches and tables with umbrellas. The area is surrounded by red brick pillars and overhead string lighting.

Black metal garbage receptacles are placed throughout the plaza.

SECTION 6. NOISE, ALCOHOL, VENDOR, & SETUP/CLEANUP RULES FOR EVENTS

Courthouse Square:

- Civic and cultural events require a permit (see section 8).
- Events must be coordinated with the Main Street Program and the Department of Quality of Life.
- Only lawn chairs and blankets are permitted in the grassy area of the Courthouse Square. All tents, booths, tables, etc. must be placed on cemented areas.

Plaza and the Courthouse Square:

Noise

Amplified sound **requires a permit**.

- Visit mgoconnect.org to apply.
- Visit tpcg.org/soundpermit to review the sound permit checklist.

Alcohol

If an event will be selling alcohol or if alcohol is included with paid entry to an event, organizers must:

- Obtain a Letter of No Objection (LONO) from TPCG (tpcg.org/eventlono).
- Obtain a State ATC alcohol permit.

Consumption only allowed if:

- Purchased from a licensed plaza merchant or through the permitted event and served in a non-glass container.
- Consumed in a permitted event space or patio.
- Served according to state and local laws.

Vendors

- Vendors and/or any cooking teams using cooking appliances must place a mat or grease pad (supplied by Houma Main Street) beneath the appliance to minimize spills. **Cooking and cooking apparatuses are not allowed on sidewalks.** A fire extinguisher is required in the tent when cooking.
- Vendors must hold:
 - Occupational license
 - Sales tax registration
 - Current TPCG Mobile Food Vendor Registration (if applicable)

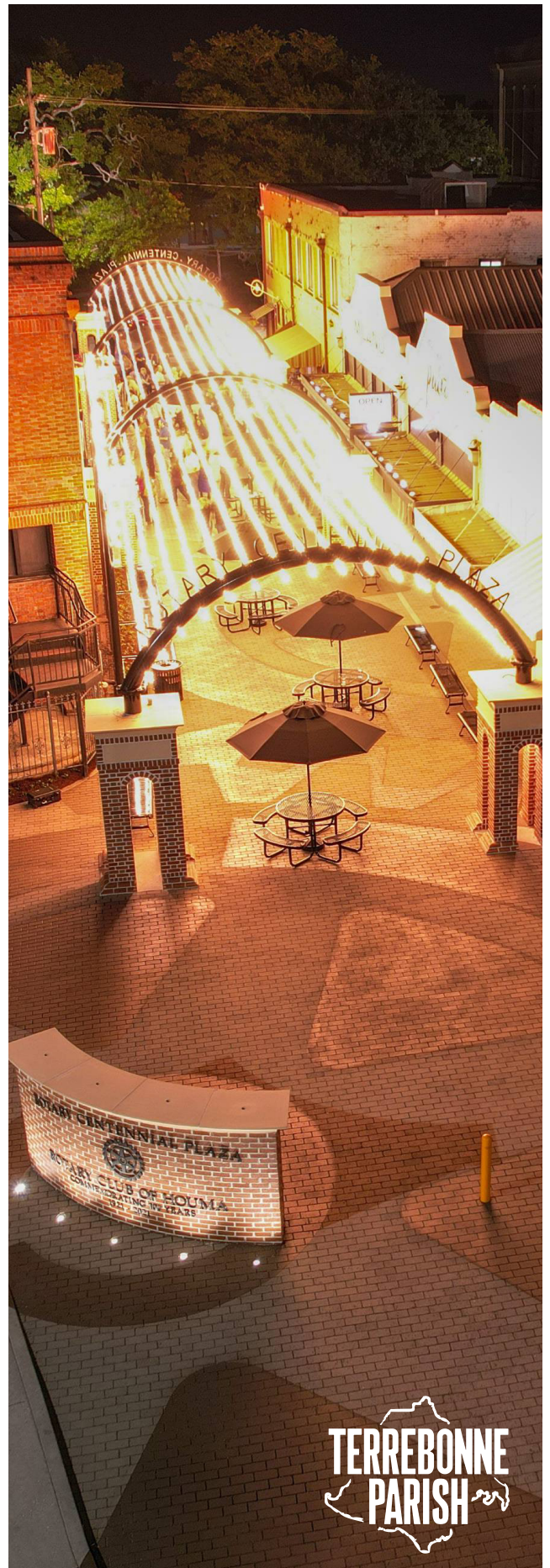
Setup

- Spaces for vendor setup should be marked with chalk or tape. Paint of any kind is not allowed.
- Event organizers must ensure all exposed extension cords are covered in a manner that avoids trip hazards.
- Tents must be secured properly for any unseen weather events (such as using weights to hold it in place).

Cleanup

Organizers must:

- Provide trash/recycling bins.
- Ensure cleanup is handled immediately following event.
- Restore the area to its pre-event condition.



Failure to comply with the rules may result in fines, loss of deposit, or suspension of future event permits.

SECTION 7. MERCHANT OPERATIONS DURING EVENTS

Permitted Events:

- Merchants may remain open.
- Merchants may continue to use designated patio area.
- Event organizers must coordinate with merchants and the Department of Quality of Life for:
 - Access points
 - Deliveries
 - Street closures
 - Vendor opportunities

Small-Scale Events (Monday-Thursday)

- Merchants may organize acoustic music, art displays, or small activities.
- The plaza must remain open to the public.
- Patio seating may be reserved for paying customers.



SECTION 8. APPLYING FOR A PUBLIC PROPERTY USE PERMIT

To host an event at the Rotary Centennial Plaza, Courthouse Square, or any other Parish property, you must obtain a Public Property Use Permit. Applications must be submitted **at least 14 days in advance of the event date** to allow for processing. Late applications may not be approved or be subject to a late fee, and Parish services cannot be guaranteed in the event of a late submission.

Late applications will require a \$250 non-refundable late fee to provide adequate time for application review and approval. Parish services cannot be guaranteed in the event of a late submission, and payment of the non-refundable late fee does not guarantee that the permit will be issued in time for the event.

For the Rotary Centennial Plaza and Courthouse Square, the PPUP requires a \$500 security deposit for cleanup and repairs of public property or assets. Deposits will be refunded as applicable via live check sent by USPS mail and may take up to four to six weeks.

Permit Office Information



Hours of Operation

Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



Address

Government Tower, Suite 100
8026 Main Street, Houma



Phone

985-873-6567

STEP 1: Complete Your Application

Consult the permit checklist to make sure you are ready to complete your application at tpcg.org/ppuchecklist. Applications can be completed in person during business hours or online anytime at mgoconnect.org. Applications must include all **applicable** items:

- Event name, date, and description
- Estimated attendance
- Site layout (e.g. tents, fencing, vendors)
- Vendor list
- Requested street closures (full & partial)
- Sound and alcohol plans
- Event security plans (must be reviewed by law enforcement)

STEP 2: Submit Required Applicable Documentation

- Liability insurance (naming TPCG as additional insured)
- State ATC Alcohol Permit
- Sound permit
- Sales tax registration
- Vendor information

Note: See Section 6 for more information on these permits.

STEP 3: Follow All Guidelines

- Ensure ADA access
- Maintain emergency vehicle routes
- Provide trash bins and arrange for cleanup
- Comply with all noise and safety codes



SECTION 9. GOOD NEIGHBOR PRACTICES

- Share event schedules with neighboring businesses.
- Avoid blocking walkways or access to adjacent storefronts.
- Monitor noise levels and lighting.
- Clean up after your activities.
- Be conscious of fellow merchants and refrain from concentrating plaza furniture in one area.
- Monitor the designated freight zone to ensure it is being used in accordance with the ordinance.
- Communicate with the Department of Quality of Life for concerns or improvements.

SECTION 10. ACCESS FOR REPAIRS OR CONTRACT WORK

If you require vehicle access to bring in materials or equipment (e.g. HVAC units, structural repair items):

- Contact the Department of Quality of Life a minimum of **72 hours in advance**.
- Bollards surrounding the Rotary Centennial Plaza can be **temporarily removed** to allow access. **Do not attempt to remove bollards independently.**
- Be sure you have obtained all necessary building and/or renovation permits.

This applies to non-routine deliveries only. For routine deliveries, standard delivery procedures should be followed.

SECTION 11. DESIGNATED FREIGHT ZONE

The plaza's designated freight zone is located on Grinage Street from Main Street toward School Street and spans approximately one hundred feet.

The freight zone is intended for commercial vehicles to load and unload freight or merchandise. These vehicles are not permitted to occupy the freight zone for a longer period than actually necessary to load or unload such freight or merchandise.

SECTION 12. ROAD CLOSURES, BARRICADES, & MERCHANT NOTIFICATION

Event organizers must:

- Provide a minimum **72-hour notice** to all impacted businesses.
- Submit a detailed barricade/site plan along with their permit.
- Avoid blocking sidewalks, ADA ramps, and business entrances.

The Parish reserves the right to modify or reject plans that do not meet these requirements. Failure to meet requirements could lead to application denial.

SECTION 13. GARBAGE COLLECTIONS

Garbage collections for this area of Downtown Houma are on Mondays and Thursdays.

If garbage is overflowing in the Courthouse Square and/or Plaza area, contact Hilary Domangue (985-873-6584) or Anne Picou (985-873-6408) with the TPCG Department of Quality of Life for assistance.

SECTION 14. SEASONAL & THEMED PROGRAMMING

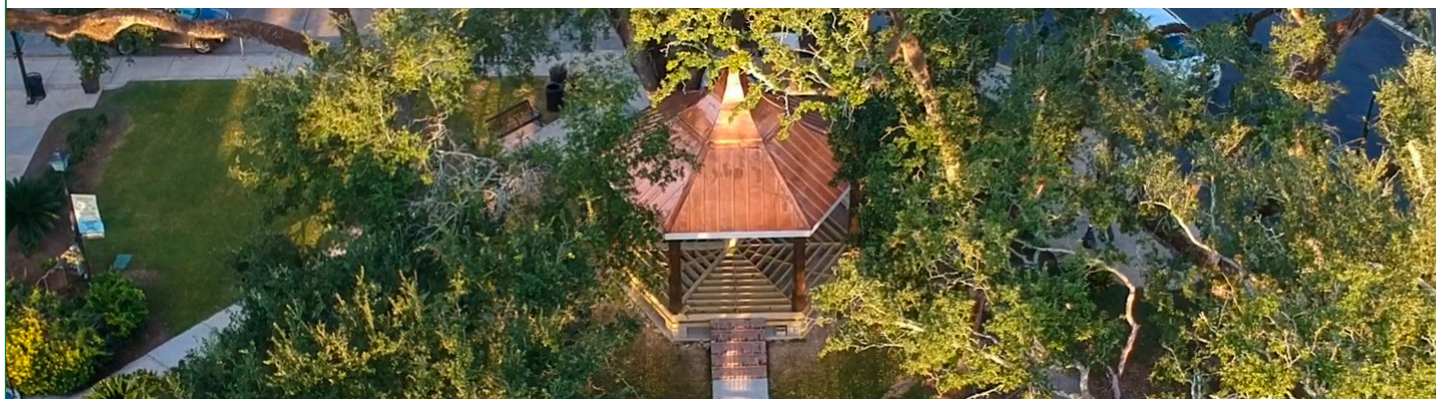
Downtown is home to vibrant cultural celebrations. Merchants are invited to participate in Parish-led programming or propose collaborative ideas. The Parish encourages:

- Holiday music and themed soundscapes
- Local musicians, artists, and displays
- Decor coordination during holidays

SECTION 15. DEPT. OF QoL & MERCHANT SUPPORT

The Department of Quality of Life serves as the primary liaison between Downtown Houma merchants, TPCG, and the broader public. The department oversees:

- Scheduling and use of public downtown spaces
- Coordinating repairs, deliveries, and access to the Rotary Centennial Plaza
- Reviewing event proposals
- Enforcing plaza rules
- Communicating and outreach with merchants
- Planning cultural programming and activities
- Local Main Street Program



SECTION 16. RELEVANT ORDINANCES

Need more information about the ordinances referenced in this handbook? Refer to the Terrebonne Parish Code of Ordinances.

TOPIC	CODE SECTION	TOPIC	CODE SECTION
Rotary Centennial Plaza Rules	Section 21-26	Streets, Sidewalks, Public Events	Chapter 21
Alcohol & Patio Service	Section 4-33(b)	Sidewalk Use & Obstruction	Chapter 22
Noise Control	Chapter 14, Article X	Occupational Licenses	Chapter 2, Article III
Freight Zone	Section 18-243		

SECTION 17. PARISH CONTACTS

CONTACT	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS
Permit Office	985-873-6567	avoisin@tpcg.org
Event Alcohol LONO	985-873-6406	jauthement@tpcg.org
Cultural Enrichment (Main Street Program)	985-873-6408	apicou@tpcg.org
Department of Quality of Life	985-873-6584	hdomangue@tpcg.org
Department of Planning & Zoning	985-873-6569	bschmill@tpcg.org
Risk Management Division	985-873-6461	jdortego@tpcg.org or jloupe@tpcg.org
Houma Police (Non-Emergency)	985-873-6371	houmapolice@tpcg.org

SECTION 18. DESIGNATED & PUBLIC PARKING

There is one designated parking lot available to support downtown merchants and their customers.

7842 Main Street Lot (Special Use Lot)

This lot is primarily reserved for Plaza merchant customer parking from **6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. daily**, except during the following periods when the lot is not available for public use:

- **Mardi Gras Season:** From the **third Monday before Mardi Gras** through the **Sunday after Mardi Gras Day**
- **Irish-Italian Parade:** The day **before, day of, and day after** the scheduled parade

Additional provisions:

- May be **reserved or blocked off** for events approved under a **Public Property Use Permit (PPUP)**
- **Cooking apparatuses** are allowed during permitted events (permitting and cleanup policies apply)
- The **lot's armature and access code** are managed exclusively by the **property owner and Terrebonne Parish**
- Intended to serve both **Plaza merchant customers** and **event programming needs** when scheduled in advance

Additionally, there are multiple **free public parking lots** available in the downtown surrounding areas.



PUBLIC PARKING

-  Plaza merchant/customer parking
-  Free public parking

Merchants are encouraged to inform their customers on all available parking.

