

## What is Site Plan Review?

Site Plan Review applies to non-residential activities, or residential development of three or more units. The Peterborough Site Plan Review Regulations provide the following guidance as to what is or is not subject to site plan review:

❖ Activities that require site plan review:

1. New construction of non-residential or multi-family.
2. A change of use (e.g. from residential to commercial).
3. Projects that involve more than 2,000 square feet of buildings, structures, or parking area, or filling, excavation, grading, or clearing of any land.
4. Commercial agriculture.

❖ Activities that do not require site plan review:

1. Non-commercial agricultural activities.
2. Proposals that involve no change in use or level of activity.
3. Internal building modifications to a non-residential use that do not affect the scale or impact of the existing use.
4. A change in use for a property that has already received Site Plan approval provided the new use is not different in type or impact.
5. One- and two-family residential development.
6. Projects of less than 2,000 square feet, unless in the judgment of the Planning Board, there are potential significant impacts.



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**Disclaimer:** This information is meant to aid potential applicants in understanding the site plan review procedures. This brochure does not take the place of Chapter 233, Site Plan Review Regulations, nor any other regulation or ordinance that might apply to an application.

**TOWN OF  
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## The Applicant's Guide to Site Plan Review



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# The Application Process

- ❖ All land use activities that are subject to the Site Plan Review Regulations are processed by the Peterborough Planning Board. The Board holds its regular meetings the second Monday of every month beginning at 7 P.M. in the Selectmen's Room of the Town House.
- ❖ Applications are filed with the Office of Community Development (OCD), located in the lower level of the Town House. Application forms, as well as the entire Regulation (Chapter 233), are available at the OCD and online.
- ❖ The filing schedule is posted at OCD and online, but the deadline is usually the third Tuesday of each month to be on the agenda for the following month.
- ❖ The application form states what information needs to be submitted to constitute a complete application, and that depends on the type of application being filed. There are also filing fees to cover the cost of noticing the abutters and posting a notice in the newspaper of the required public hearing. OCD staff are available to help applicants through the process.

## Submittal of Applications

- ❖ Applications are filed with the OCD, but the actual submittal can only take place at the Planning Board meeting. The staff of OCD process the application, which includes reviewing it for completeness, posting the required public notices, sending notices to all

abutters and other affected parties, and scheduling the submittal of the application at the appropriate Planning Board meeting.

- ❖ There is a separate application form for each type of site plan (major or minor); the accompanying checklist of submission items varies, as well, for each type of application.
- ❖ For larger projects the Director of Public Works and the Police and Fire Chiefs participate in staff review.
- ❖ If any application is found to be incomplete, OCD staff will communicate this to the applicant and work with him or her to determine whether the application can move forward or must be tabled. Typically, incomplete applications would not be placed on the Board's agenda.
- ❖ A staff report prepared by the OCD Director that includes all other Department comments is sent to the Planning Board and the applicant approximately five days prior to the scheduled meeting.
- ❖ In the case of any application that is lacking some submission items, the staff report will note this (and advise the applicant), along with an opinion as to whether or not it affects moving forward. That decision, however, can only be made by the Board.

## Board Action on Applications

- ❖ Most applications are heard and voted on the same evening. Larger projects typically take more than one meeting to decide; it is a function of the amount of information and detail that needs to be reviewed by staff, the Board, and in some cases, a third party peer review.

- ❖ Customary Board procedure, especially if there are multiple applications on the agenda, is to hear all of the applications, in the order in which they appear on the agenda, and then deliberate after all applications have been presented and heard.
- ❖ Following the meeting, a Notice of Decision is prepared and signed by the Chair or Vice-Chair and sent to the applicant. In the case of a denial, the Decision will include the reasons for the denial and the process for an appeal.

## Minor Site Plan Review

- ❖ The Peterborough regulations allow for an expedited review of minor projects, such as:
  - \* Projects that involve more than 2,000 square feet but less than 50% of the existing developed area.
  - \* A change in use of an existing non-residential or multi-family development.
  - \* Plans that involve only parking, landscaping, signage, and/or lighting.
- ❖ Applications still require public notice and hearing, but instead of going to the Planning Board they are heard by the Minor Site Plan Review Committee, which is made up of the Directors of OCD, Public Works, Police, and Fire, the Code Enforcement Officer, and one Planning Board member.