

# A Guide to the Site Plan Review and Approval Process



**City of Bristol, Connecticut**  
**March, 1992**  
**revised January 28, 2025**

## Introduction

The procedure described in this booklet has been established by the City of Bristol for the processing of Site Plans required in accordance with Section XI of the city's Zoning Regulations. Its purpose is to clearly and comprehensively explain the process of Site Plan review and approval and to improve the quality of Site Plan submissions.

The City of Bristol's Zoning Regulations (effective December 21, 1990) require that Site Plan approval shall be obtained from the Zoning Commission "prior to the establishment, expansion or change of any use of land and/or structure which requires a Special Permit" [Section XI.A.2.a.] or from the Planning Commission "prior to the establishment, expansion or change of any use of land and/or structure which is permitted by right and requires Site Plan approval" [Section XI.A.2.b.].

To assist the Commissions with this responsibility, the City has established a Site Plan Review Committee consisting of the Director of Public Works, the City Engineer, the Building Official, the Zoning Enforcement Officer, the City Planner, the Fire Marshal, the Superintendent of the Water Department and the Traffic Officer from the Police Department. The Committee, which meets on a weekly basis, does not itself approve Site Plans; rather, it acts in a technical capacity, reviewing Site Plans for the Planning Commission and the Zoning Commission to determine their compliance with the various city regulations and requirements regarding development. Final approval of all Site Plans, as noted above, rests with the appropriate Commission. As you will see, the activity of the Site Plan Review Committee and the Commissions intersect at several points throughout the Site Plan review and approval process.

No building permit, including a foundation permit, shall be issued for a project until the Site Plan has been approved by the appropriate Commission and signed by its chairman or secretary. All plans submitted on or after December 21, 1990 shall comply with the procedure described in this booklet.

Prior to any formal submission, you may wish to meet with the City Planner in order to discuss the Site Plan review and approval process in greater detail.

## SITE PLAN REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

### Plan Submission



To begin the Site Plan review and approval process, you need to submit the following items to the Land Use Office:

- a completed "Request for Site Plan Approval" form
- the filing fee as established by the commissions (make checks payable to "City of Bristol")
- six paper copies of the Site Plan for the original submission. Subsequent submissions may be provided digitally.
- one digital copy pdf version of the Site Plan
- two sets of exterior building elevations
- one set of drainage calculations and the design details of any proposed drywells (including the results of percolation tests)

These items must be submitted together as a complete package, rather than separately at different times.

After submission, your Site Plan will travel along two interrelated paths: a technical staff review by the Site Plan Review Committee and an administrative review by the Planning Commission or Zoning Commission.

### Staff Review of the Site Plan



At the next meeting of the Site Plan Review Committee after your Site Plan has been submitted, the City Planner will distribute a copy of the plan to each member of the Committee. The Committee will then schedule a review of the plan for an upcoming meeting (usually the following week, depending on the plan's complexity and the number of other plans to be reviewed).

The Committee will review your Site Plan at its next available meeting, as scheduled. Please note that the weekly Committee meetings involve city staff members only; your participation is not necessary. The Committee meets weekly (usually every Tuesday afternoon) at which time the City Planner distributes copies of newly-received Site Plans and the Committee reviews and discusses Site Plans distributed at previous meetings.

Following the Committee meeting, the City Planner will compile into a written summary all the comments, questions or concerns raised by the Committee during its review of your Site Plan. A copy of this summary will be sent to you within approximately five working days after Committee review. A copy of this summary will also be sent to the Commission responsible for acting on the Site Plan and, if the site abuts

a State highway, to the Connecticut Department of Transportation (along with a copy of the plan).

Prior to revising your Site Plan, you should attempt to address and resolve all staff comments contained in the written summary. After you receive the summary, you should contact directly any member of the Committee whose comments you wish to discuss in greater detail. The members of the Site Plan Review Committee are listed in the back of this booklet.

After you have resolved the staff comments as best you can, you should make the necessary changes to your Site Plan and submit seven copies of the revised plan to the Land Use Office. If necessary, the plan will again be distributed to the Site Plan Review Committee and checked relative to any outstanding technical matters. If any staff comments remain as the result of a subsequent review by the Committee, you will receive a written summary as before.

Provided that it has been submitted prior to the monthly filing deadline of the appropriate Commission, your application for Site Plan approval will be placed on the agenda of that Commission's next regular meeting, and the statutory "time clock" will begin. At that first meeting, the staff will report to the Commission as to the status of your Site Plan. (As noted above, the Commission will receive a copy of the written summary of the Site Plan Review Committee's comments for each review conducted by the Committee.)

Depending upon the technical "readiness" of the plan the Commission may: conduct its review and take action on the Site Plan; begin its review of the plan but continue it at a subsequent meeting; or postpone its review to a subsequent meeting. A continuation or postponement is likely to occur if: a substantial number of Site Plan Review Committee comments remain unaddressed or unresolved, major revisions need to be made to the plan, and/or the Site Plan Review Committee needs additional time to complete its technical review of your Site Plan.

If your Site Plan requires review at more than one Commission meeting, the plan will automatically be carried over to subsequent meetings until final action is taken by that Commission.

## Commission Review of the Site Plan



At each subsequent Commission meeting – as at the initial meeting – the staff will report on the status of your Site Plan and will also bring to the Commission's attention any matters which, for whatever reason, have been unable to be resolved by you and the staff. When the technical review of the plan has been completed (and within the statutory time limits for action on Site Plans), the Commission will render the final decision on your Site Plan. The Commission may approve the plan, approve the plan with modifications and/or stipulations, or deny the plan.

Within 15 days after the Commission acts on your Site Plan, you will receive a certified letter officially notifying you of the Commission's action. If your Site Plan has been approved, you should then submit eight copies of the approved plan (incorporating any revisions, if necessary) to the Land Use Office for sign-off by the Commission's chairman or secretary.

After the Site Plan has been signed off, the City Planner will return one signed copy to you, keep one copy on file in the Land Use Office, and distribute the remaining copies to the City Engineer (three copies), the Building Official, the Fire Marshal and the Water Department. Please note that the signed Site Plan is the only plan against which all site improvements will be checked in the field by city staff.

## General Requirements



## SITE PLAN CHECKLIST

1. The Site Plan shall be based upon a survey map prepared in accordance with Class A-2 survey standards pursuant to the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies Section 20-300b-1 through 20-300b-20 and the "Standards for Surveys and Maps in the State of Connecticut" as adopted by the Connecticut Association of Land Surveyors, Inc. on September 26, 1996.

The survey map shall be certified, signed and sealed by a registered land surveyor licensed to conduct business in the State of Connecticut as being in conformance with A-2 survey standards. If a separate survey map is used, a copy shall be attached to the Site Plan.

2. The Site Plan shall be drawn at a scale of 1" = 10' or 1" = 20'; for unusually large developments, the Site Plan may be drawn at a scale of 1" = 40' or 1" = 50', provided that details of particularly sensitive areas are drawn at a larger scale.
3. The Site Plan shall be drawn on sheets which are 24" by 36", 18" by 24" or 12" by 18" in size. Depending upon the size of the development and the scale of the plan, the lot may be shown on more than one sheet, using "match lines" as necessary.
4. For ease of readability, related elements of the Site Plan may be shown on separate drawings (e.g., drainage and grading plan, landscaping plan).
5. The Site Plan shall be sealed by an engineer and may be sealed by an architect and/or landscape architect. Each such professional shall be registered and licensed to conduct business in the State of Connecticut.
6. All existing features on the lot such as trees, driveways and structures shall be shown on the Site Plan and labeled as "existing" and their disposition noted (e.g., "to be removed", "to remain").

## Plan Information



1. Title block showing the name of the development or plan, the name of the property owner, and the name of the developer
2. Scale; approximate true north point
3. Date of original plan; date and nature of each subsequent revision
4. Small key map showing the location of the lot relative to surrounding properties and streets

## Lot Information



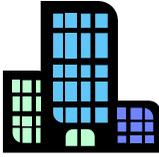
1. Assessor's map and lot numbers of the lot; street address
2. Zoning district of the lot
3. Property lines of the lot with accurate distances and bearings
4. Bench mark on USCGS or other city-approved datum
5. Any existing city or state highway monuments
6. Lot area (in acres or square feet)
7. Dimension, location and type of any existing and proposed easements or rights-of-way on or adjacent to the lot
8. Required front, side and rear yard (setback) lines
9. Names of abutting property owners
10. Location of any existing buildings or structures within 50 feet of the lot, where such information is within the ability of the applicant to obtain

## Natural Features



1. Any existing natural features such as wooded areas (shown by foliage lines), major rock outcroppings, etc.
2. Any dominant vegetation and/or significant topographic feature within 20 feet of the lot, where such information is within the ability of the applicant to obtain
3. Location, size and species of any existing trees 15 inches or greater in diameter in unwooded or sparsely wooded areas; specimen trees in heavily wooded areas
4. Location and extent of existing wetlands, watercourses, floodplains, or stream encroachment lines on the lot
5. Existing and proposed contours at intervals of not more than two feet on that portion of the lot being developed and within 50 feet thereof, and at intervals of not more than five feet on the balance of the lot

## Buildings and Structures



1. Location, configuration and use of each existing and proposed structure and building on the lot:
  - a. dimensions (in feet)
  - b. height (in feet)
  - c. gross floor area (in square feet); amount of gross floor area per story, if more than one story
  - d. type of proposed use(s) (e.g., "retail store", "warehouse", "medical office", "restaurant")
  - e. location of building entrances and exits
  - f. location of any loading/unloading areas or truck docks
2. Corner grades and finished floor elevation(s)
3. The shortest distance between each side of the proposed building and the nearest lot line
4. The shortest distance between adjoining buildings on the lot

## Parking, Driveways and Streets



1. Parking layout:
  - a. existing and proposed parking spaces
  - b. inner curbing; wheelstops, if provided
  - c. driveways and access aisles
  - d. dimensions, radii of curves, paving materials, spot grades, and any internal traffic flow signs and markings
2. Parking calculation showing how the number of required parking spaces was determined
3. Driveway(s):
  - a. location and width of existing and proposed driveway openings
  - b. distance between each driveway opening and the nearest street intersection
  - c. distance between each driveway opening and the nearest lot corner (measured at the street line)
4. Existing spot elevations of the street – shown at the center line, at the gutter or curb, and at the street line – at intervals of 50 feet along the lot's frontage, to a distance of 100 feet beyond the side lot lines
5. Existing spot elevations of the street at its intersection with the proposed driveway
6. Existing and proposed curbing at the gutter line (must be installed where none exists)

## Infrastructure



1. Location, size and material of existing and proposed gas, water and sanitary sewer lines (mains, wyes and laterals)
2. Location, invert elevation, and top-of-frame elevation of existing and proposed sanitary sewer manholes
3. Location, size and material of existing and proposed storm drainage pipes
4. Location, invert elevation, and top-of-frame elevation of existing and proposed storm drainage manholes, catch basins, yard drains and drywells
5. Location of any septic tanks and leaching fields
6. Location and type of any existing and proposed storage tanks (above- or underground), gasoline pumps, gas meters, etc.
7. Location of any existing and proposed fire hydrants, utility structures (e.g., electric and telephone poles), traffic signs, etc. on or adjacent to the lot
8. Distance to nearest fire hydrant, if not adjacent to the lot
9. "Call-Before-You Dig" telephone number: 1-800-922-4455

## Landscaping Features



1. Location, size, species, and quantity of existing and proposed planting and landscaping materials (including trees, shrubs, and ground cover)
2. Location and width of any required landscaped buffers
3. Location, width and paving material of existing and proposed sidewalks (within the lot and along the lot's street frontage)
4. Location of trash enclosure(s) and any outside storage areas
5. Location, size and materials of any existing and proposed fences, gates, and retaining walls; provide construction details of any proposed retaining walls
6. Location, height and type of existing and proposed lighting
7. Location of mailboxes (multi-family developments)

## Miscellaneous



1. Erosion and sedimentation control plan, where required
2. Date, application number and nature of any variances granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals or any Special Permits granted by the Zoning Commission
3. Date and nature of all other relevant local approvals (e.g., Inland Wetlands Agency, Board of Public Works; see "Other Approvals" below)

4. A data table indicating the relationship between the following requirements and compliance therewith:

	<u>Required/Allowed</u>	<u>Submitted</u>
minimum lot area:	_____ sq. ft.	_____ sq. ft.
minimum lot frontage*:	_____ ft.	_____ ft.
minimum lot width**:	_____ ft.	_____ ft.
minimum front yard:	_____ ft.	_____ ft.
minimum side yard:	_____ ft.	_____ ft.
minimum rear yard:	_____ ft.	_____ ft.
max. building height:	_____ ft.	_____ ft.
max. building coverage:	_____ %	_____ %
no. of parking spaces:	_____ spaces	_____ spaces

*\*for developments in residential zones*

*\*\*for developments in business or industrial zones*

## OTHER APPROVALS

Your Site Plan or some element(s) thereof may require the approval of one or more other public agencies besides the Planning Commission or Zoning Commission. Obtaining these approvals is your responsibility and, in most cases, should be done prior to final Commission action on the plan. Such approvals may include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:



### Board of Public Works

- multiple driveway openings on a city street
- radii on a driveway opening on a city street
- driveway opening within 10' of a side lot line at the street line
- reduction in width of a sidewalk along the street line
- deferment of sidewalk construction on a city street

### Inland Wetlands Agency

- activity in or adjacent to a designated wetlands or watercourse (e.g., stormwater discharge into a stream)
- activity within a 100-year floodplain

### Aquifer Protection Agency

- previously registered regulated activity may continue
- new regulated activity cannot be registered and is not allowed

**Zoning Board of Appeals**

- variance from requirements of the Zoning Regulations

**Bristol Development Authority**

- development is within an urban renewal or redevelopment area

**Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT)**

- development abuts a State highway

**Connecticut Office of the State Traffic Administration (OSTA)**

- development is a "major traffic generator" which has an exit or entrance on, abuts or adjoins, or will substantially affect traffic on a State Highway

**SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**Public Works Department/Engineering Division**

William Stango, City Engineer 860-584-6125

**Public Works Department/Land Use Division**

Robert M. Flanagan, City Planner  
Andrew Armstrong, Assistant City Planner 860-584-6225

**Building Department/Zoning Enforcement**

Richard Brown, Building Official 860-584-6215  
Brandon Peate, Zoning Enforcement Officer

**Police Department/Traffic Division**

Lt. Patrick Krajewski 860-584-3030

**Water Department**

Paul Keegan, Assistant Superintendent 860-582-7431

**Fire Department**

Kristopher Lambert, Fire Marshal 860-584-7964  
Ext. 102