



Development Guide

City of Groton, CT

www.cityofgroton.com

WELCOME!

We are pleased that you are considering the City of Groton for your business or property development project. Whether you are building new, substantially renovating or investing in an already existing business/development, the City is committed to assisting you with that process.

This guide is intended to provide you with some basic knowledge you will need for a successful development. Staff will work with you every step of the way to keep the process moving in a positive direction. Please read this guide carefully. Understanding each of the steps will make the entire process much easier. These guidelines are likely to apply whether you are developing a new site, moving into an existing building or renovating or expanding an existing site.

PLEASE NOTE: This guide should be used in conjunction with all other applicable city/state and or health laws, regulations and ordinances. It does not or cannot replace those requirements.

This guide does not address the City's Subdivision Process.

Directory

There are several principal individuals and commissions you and your engineer and/or architect are likely to work with through your project approval process. The following directory is made available for your convenience:

City Officials

City Planner - Barbara Goodrich (860) 446-4169 goodrichb@cityofgroton-ct.gov

Building, Zoning and Wetlands Officer - Carlton Smith (860) 446-4104 smithc@cityofgroton-ct.gov

Fire Marshal - Robert Tompkins (860) 445-2456 tompkinsr@cityofgroton-ct.gov

Fire Chief - Nick Delia (860) 446-4176 delian@cityofgroton-ct.gov

Highway Department - Tim Umrysz (860) 446-4127 umryszt@cityofgroton-ct.gov

Groton Utilities – Electric and Water (860) 446-4000

Ledge Light Health District (860) 448-4882 (important resource for restaurants)

Mayor's Office: (860) 446-4103

City Development Commissions

Planning & Zoning Commission - contact Barbara Goodrich, goodrichb@cityofgroton-ct.gov

Inland Wetlands Commission – contact Carlton Smith, smithc@cityofgroton-ct.gov

Economic Development Commission- contact Barbara Goodrich, goodrichb@cityofgroton-ct.gov

Zoning Board of Appeals -contact Carlton Smith, smithc@cityofgroton-ct.gov

City of Groton website: www.cityofgroton.com

Step 1 – Site Selection

If you need assistance in identifying a site, you may wish to contact the City Planner to help you identify the best place to locate your project based on Zoning Regulations. Some areas of the City are zoned for commercial or manufacturing or residential uses. Using the Groton GIS system is a good tool and highly recommended. The site is <http://gis.groton-ct.gov> and can also be accessed from the City of Groton website at www.cityofgroton.com through the Planning or Zoning Department page.

Talking about possible site(s) with the Building Official, Fire Marshall, Highway Department, Groton Utilities may also be helpful. This meeting can be coordinated by the City Planner. If you are considering locating into an existing building, we will work with you to determine whether you need formal site plan review at this point in the process.

Key “Take Aways”

- Contact the Planning Staff **early** in the process
- Determine the best location for your project. What zone(s) allow for your proposed project in the City
- Use the Groton GIS site for individual property and site information
<http://gis.groton-ct.gov>.

NOTE: Almost all new business and industrial uses and additions will require Site Plan approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission. Many also require a Coastal Site Plan Application. Consult the Zoning Regulations or meet with the Planning Director to determine if your proposed use requires site plan approval.

Step 2 – Pre-Application and Reviews

Once you have identified a site that will accommodate your needs, your next step will be to develop a plan for the site. If you are building new, making changes to a site and/or expanding an existing building, you may need to hire a professional engineer, land surveyor and possibly a soil scientist (based on location of wetlands) and discuss your building requirements with an architect or building contractor, if you have not done so already. At this point, you, along with your engineer, should review the City’s Zoning Regulations (on line at www.cityofgroton.com) and you are encouraged to discuss the requirements for submitting a site plan with the City Planner.

On larger or complex developments, you may wish to prepare a conceptual site layout first, so that City Staff have the opportunity to review the layout at a very early stage and make recommendations based on City and State regulations before your engineer gets too far along on the design of the site. This step will save you time and money. The City Planner will make sure to include other key city staff in that conceptual review meeting. Be aware that the role of City staff is to react to your plans and advise you based on regulations and procedures. They cannot help design your project.

Key “Take Aways”

- Become very familiar with the City’s Zoning Regulations and application requirements (www.cityofgroton.com – Planning or Zoning Dept. page)
- Talk to or meet with the City Planner and City staff early in your development process **bringing with you** your concept plans or draft plans
- City Staff can help with interpretation of Regulations but cannot design your project.

Step 3 – Formal Application and Review

If staff advise that a land use application is required, the forms and the fee schedule are available online at www.cityofgroton.com or at the front counter of the Municipal Building. The requirements for a complete application submittal include items such as the application form, payment, site development plans, building elevations, drainage calculations and other pertinent information and are listed in the appropriate section of the Zoning Regulations. For example, Site Plan requirements are in Section 6.6.

If your project requires approval from other land use boards such as the Zoning Board of Appeals or the Inlands Wetlands Commission, staff will let you know how and when to apply. Those approvals must come before the Planning and Zoning Commission can act.

When your engineer completes the final design and you submit the formal land use application(s) and fees, the City Planner will:

1. Distribute your application and plans.
2. Schedule a formal staff review meeting(s) with you and appropriate City staff. This meeting(s) will give you an opportunity to discuss any changes/suggestion made by City Departments before the complete site plans are reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission. Staff can set up additional meetings or plan reviews if requested and as time allows.

Key “Take Aways”

- The more complete your initial plans are and the better they comply with the City/state Regulations, the fewer changes you will have to make.
- The City Staff make all efforts to provide applicants with comments in a timely fashion in order to give you adequate time to make plan revisions, if required.
- This process is recommended and intended to give you guidance and make the Commission approval process go more smoothly. It is not an approval or denial of your plan.

Step 4 – Commission Review and Approval

The Planning and Zoning Commission typically meets the third Tuesday of each month. Any complete application submitted two weeks prior to a meeting will be included on the agenda as a new application.

If your project requires a public hearing such as: amendments to Zoning Regulations or the Zoning map; or a Special Permit (A Special Permit are uses which may have special impacts on the land or neighborhood), the Commission has 65-days to set the public hearing date, 35-days to complete the hearing and 65-days to make a decision on the application

If no public hearing is required, the Commission has 65-days from the date your complete application was accepted at a Commission meeting, to make a decision on an application.

What to expect at the Commission meeting: You and/or your representative will present your project and the plans. The Commission will review and ask questions about the use, lot and building’s dimensions, layout meet the City and State regulations. Items such as landscaping, lighting, parking, drainage, signage and grading, traffic flow all may be discussed. If a public hearing is required, the public will also be allowed the opportunity to comment on the project. Staff will review any outstanding concerns of the staff, or other land use commissions with the commission. The commission will usually take one of two actions: move to table the application for further information or move to approve the project – possibly with modifications that allow it to meet regulations.

Key “Take Aways”

- The Planning and Zoning Commission has up to 65 days to approve your application after submittal
- A public **meeting** with Planning and Zoning is required. A public **hearing** is required only for certain projects.
- If your proposal satisfies all zoning requirements, then the Planning and Zoning Commission must approve your proposal

Other Helpful Information:

What is a Variance and why would I have to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals?

If you are proposing a development that does not meet the requirements of the Zoning Regulations (i.e. locating a new building or addition closer to the property line than is allowed by the Zoning Regulations) you will need to apply for a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) before you apply for Site Plan or Special Permit approval. The ZBA decides if your project has a specific hardship due to the site, for example the lot is a corner lot and has 2 frontages. If you are granted a variance, then that regulation is changed for your project.

Why would I have to go to the Conservation Commission?

The City of Groton has places where there are Inland Wetlands. These are important environmental assets. Any possible impact on them from a project must be reviewed under the City’s Regulations. A soil scientist can help you determine if there are any Inland Wetlands within 200 feet of your project. Staff can also help you determine if this step is required, depending on your site.

Why do I have to go through this if I am just opening a new business in a vacant building?

You may not have to. There are certain administrative approvals that can be granted if your business is allowed in the zone and you are not changing the building or the site. See the City staff as soon as possible so that they can help you make this as easy as possible.

Will I have to hire architects, engineers, and have other expenses for the land use approval process?

It is possible. Any changes to the building will require building permits and fees and may require an architect or engineer’s services. If the use will be a restaurant the Health Department will also get involved. Some changes to a site, such as installing retaining walls or changing parking areas or access may require a surveyor or site engineer. Many of these requirements are to meet state codes and laws regarding public health and safety and handicapped accessibility. Staff can guide you, but cannot design the project for you. Having your own professional will make sure your project is the best it can be.

Other Helpful Contacts:

State Traffic Commission

If your proposed building is greater than 100,000 sq. ft. or will require 200 parking spaces or more, you will need a permit from the State Traffic Commission (STC). You should submit an application to the STC at the earliest possible time. You may reach STC staff at 860-594-3020.

State Department of Transportation

If you are located on a State highway, a State Department of Transportation (DOT) curb cut permit may be required. You will need to contact CTDOT staff and have them review your plan early in the process. You may call DOT District IV at 860-585-2800.

Call Before You Dig, - call 811.

Vendor's License: Possession of a vendor's license allows sales from the street and sidewalks of the City of Groton. The Vendor's license requires both a Certificate of Zoning Compliance from the Zoning Officer and a license from the Police Department.

(Note: all vendors must first go to the Zoning Department before the Police will issue a permit. Food vendors must visit the Health Department and Zoning Department prior to receiving permit from the Police Department.)

Contact: City of Groton Police Department
295 Meridian St.
Groton, CT 06340
Phone: 860-446-4187
Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

File Business Forms at the Town Clerk's Office – Town of Groton 45 Fort Hill Rd. Groton, CT 06340

Registration of DBA (business name) DBA identifies you, the owner as having that business name at the address listed.

Liquor licenses needs to be renewed annually as required by the State of Connecticut

Dissolution of Business: Record the dissolution with Town Clerk

Dissolution of Trade Name: A required filing for companies no longer in business.

Record licenses or permits (as required):

(Fees Apply)

Contact:, Town Clerk
45 Fort Hill Rd.
Groton, CT 06340
Phone: 860-441-6796
Office hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Office of the Tax Assessor/Collector

New business owners should speak directly to the Assessor's Office to place the company on the Town's Personal Property list. The business will be removed from the tax rolls automatically after filing a **Dissolution of Trade Name** form with the Town Clerk's office.

Contact: Office of the Tax Assessor
45 Fort Hill Rd
Groton, CT 06340
Phone: 860-441-6660
Hours: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

State of Connecticut Business Licensing Information

Contact: State of Connecticut Licensing Info Center
Phone: **1-800-392-2122**
Web site: www.CT-CLIC.com
Email: SmartStart@cerc.com

Tax I. D. numbers are obtained from

CT Department of Revenue Service
25 Sigourney Street
Hartford, CT 06104
Phone: CONN-Tax Information Line: **1-800-382-9463**

Limited Liability Companies, (LLCs), are recorded with

The Office of the Secretary of the State
Commercial Recording Division
30 Trinity Street
Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: (860) 509-6003