

City of Groton, Connecticut

Site Plan Guide: Uses and Zoning Standards

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A Site Plan Permit is issued for uses that are considered ‘as of right’ within a particular zoning district. Site Plans are reviewed for compliance with the standards set forth within the Zoning Regulations by either Staff or the Planning and Zoning Commission – as outlined in *Section 9.3 Site Plan Application*. Some uses or activities are exempt, meaning they do not require Site Plan Review and may be subject only to a Zoning Permit.

To assist applicants in understanding when a Site Plan Permit may be required, the City of Groton, Department of Planning and Economic Development, has developed this summary to call attention to elements of the Zoning Regulations that require a Site Plan Permits. This summary is for convenience only and does not replace the Zoning Regulations. It is the applicant’s responsibility to be familiar with the Regulations and all application requirements:

Uses Requiring Site Plan Approval

3. Residence Zones &
4. Business & Industrial Zones

Principal and Accessory Uses listed within the respective Zoning District as requiring **Site Plan** approval by the Commission or Staff.

Uses Exempt from Site Plan Approval (see Section 9.3 Site Plan Application)

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 9.3.B.1, the following activities shall be exempt from the requirement to submit a formal Site Plan application (**a Zoning Permit may still be required**) provided that a plot plan drawn to scale is submitted to the City Planner and/or Zoning and Building Official showing any changes from existing conditions, such as new signs, revised parking arrangements and entrances, new lighting and similar alterations:
 - a. when the structure or use is existing and will not be enlarged.
 - b. when off-street parking requirements for the new use are not more than those required for the existing use.
 - c. when the site is in the Industrial/Technology Zone or the Technology Campus zone and:
 - the use is permitted,
 - the use will not result in a structure over 10,000 square feet,
 - the use will not result in a structure over 25 feet in height, and
 - the site to be built upon does not abut or lie immediately across the street from a residential zone.

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Standards

5.3 Flood Protection Overlay Zone

E. General Requirements

3. The Commission shall review plans for new developments requiring **Site Plan** approval or Special Permit in order to determine whether such development is consistent with the need to minimize flood damage within the flood prone areas and to determine whether proposed developments and building sites will be reasonably safe from flooding. Special consideration shall be given to the placement of public

6.6. Gasoline Stations, Vehicle Dealerships, Vehicle Repair and Service

10. No application for Approval of Location for any gasoline station, vehicle dealership or vehicle repair and/or service garage, shall be accepted by the Zoning Board of Appeals unless and until the Planning and Zoning Commission has previously approved the **Site Plan** and authorized the issuance of a Special Permit.

6.12. Telecommunication Facilities

B. Permitted Facilities

See table

7.1 Parking and Loading Requirements

J. Surface / Lighting / Landscaping Requirements

5. All parking areas shall be landscaped in accordance with the requirements below:
 - d. A planting area with a minimum width of three (3) feet shall be provided between the parking area and the required setback line on any parcel, except in the Industrial / Technology (IT) or Technology Campus (TC) zones, where:
 - A **Site Plan** approval or Special Permit is required, and
 - The parking area faces a street or property line.

7.2 Sign Regulations

F. Commercial Advertising Signs in Non-Residential Zones

Indirectly illuminated commercial advertising signs are permitted in the General Commercial, Industrial / Technology, and Technology Campus Zones subject to Special Permit approval and **Site Plan** approval and the following conditions:

1. Not more than one commercial advertising sign shall be permitted on a lot and the sign area of such sign shall not exceed a length of 48 feet nor a vertical dimension of 14 feet. All such commercial advertising signs shall be ground signs.
2. Such signs shall be located only where the applicable zone extends at least 250 feet in all directions from the proposed sign and shall not be placed closer than 750 feet apart, measured along the center-line of the street to any other such sign.

3. Such signs shall comply with all yard setback requirements for principal building in the applicable zone, but in no case shall such yard setback be less than 20 feet from any lot line.
4. The maximum height of the structure shall not exceed the maximum height for principal buildings in the applicable zone, nor shall it exceed a height of 40 feet above the ground level nor 24 feet above the curb level of the street to which it is oriented.
5. When such signs are visible from the main traveled way of a limited access highway and are located within 500 feet of such highway, they shall not be placed closer than 3,500 feet apart measured along the center-line of such highway to any other such sign.
6. When pre-existing commercial advertising signs exist, the owner may apply to the Planning and Zoning Commission to remove and relocate such sign with a new commercial advertising sign of equivalent size which conforms to this Section in all respects; except that the Commission may allow such relocation 50% closer to other commercial signs than otherwise required.

7.3. Filling and Removing Of Earth Products

Site Plan approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission is required when items 1.a thru 1.f are not met.

7.7. Stormwater Management

B. Applicability

The provisions of this Section of the Regulations shall apply to any development within the City of Groton which requires approval of a **Site Plan** in accordance with Section 9.3 of these Regulations or approval of a Special Permit in accordance with Section 9.4 of these Regulations.

7.8. Performance Standards

C. Standards for Dangerous or Objectionable Elements

5. **Noise** – The maximum sound pressure level radiated at the lot or street line by any use or facility shall not exceed the values tolerable in a specifically affected residential neighborhood, unless such levels are specifically authorized as an integral part of a Special Permit approval and **Site Plan** approval.
9. **Waste materials** - Waste materials used for the purpose of fill may be permitted only in areas designated by the Commission, subject to Special Permit approval and **Site Plan** approval in accordance with Section 7.3, herein.

8.3 Non-Conforming Uses, Structures and Lots

A. Non-Conforming Uses

2. **Alteration Or Enlargement** - A non-conforming use shall not be extended or enlarged and no structure containing a non-conforming use shall be structurally altered except:
 - a. To make it a conforming structure;
 - b. To comply with requirements of health and safety laws or ordinances; and/or
 - c. Subject to Special Permit approval and **Site Plan** approval by the Commission, to result in a situation with a lesser impact upon the surrounding area than the existing use.

3. **Relocation** - A pre-existing non-conforming use may, subject to Special Permit approval and **Site Plan** approval by the Commission, be moved or relocated provided that such moving or relocation will:
 - a. Reduce or eliminate the non-conformity; or
 - b. Result, in the opinion of the Commission, in a situation with a lesser impact upon the surrounding area than the existing use.
4. **Change Of Use** - The Commission may, subject to Special Permit approval and **Site Plan** approval, allow a change from a pre-existing non-conforming use to another non-conforming use provided that:
 - a. The proposed use is similar in intensity to the existing use or lower in intensity than the existing use; and
 - b. The proposed use will have a lesser impact upon the surrounding area than the existing use.

B. Non-Conforming Structures

3. **Alteration Or Enlargement** - A non-conforming structure shall not be extended, enlarged, or altered except:
 - a. To make it a conforming structure;
 - b. To comply with requirements of health and safety laws or ordinances;
 - c. Subject to **Site Plan** approval by the Commission, changes to the exterior appearance of the non-conforming structure may be permitted when the Commission determines that such change is more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood; and/or
 - d. Subject to Special Permit approval and **Site Plan** approval by the Commission, to result in a situation with a lesser impact upon the surrounding area than the existing structure.
4. **Relocation** - A pre-existing non-conforming structure may, subject to Special Permit approval and **Site Plan** approval by the Commission, be moved or relocated provided that such moving or relocation will:
 - a. Reduce or eliminate the non-conformity; or
 - b. Result, in the opinion of the Commission, in a situation with a lesser impact upon the surrounding area than the existing structure.

9.3. Site Plan Application

This section applies to all uses and activities subject to **Site Plan** approval.

9.4. Special Permit Application

When exterior building alterations, expansion or modifications to a site is necessary to support a Special Permit use or activity, the provisions of 9.3 **Site Plan** Application are required.

Appendix A

In addition to all applicable sections of the Zoning Regulations Appendix A shall be referenced for all information required to be submitted at the time of application is filed at the City of Groton.

Failure to provide the required information at time of application may result in one of the following: a) the application not being received by the Commission at its next regularly scheduled meeting; or b) denial of the application.

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