

Overview of Site Plan Review Process: Minor Development Review

On April 21, 2021 the Town Council approved amendments to Chapter 405B – Site Plan Review Ordinance enabling “major” and “minor” development review processes. This memorandum seeks to clarify the details of each review process to ensure a smooth transition for the Town.

Minor Development Review

Minor development review provides a permitting framework that enables Staff level review and approval of applicable Site Plan Review standards for projects that would otherwise require Planning Board review and approval.

Only projects that are in the **Industrial District, Light Industrial District, or within the Innovation District of the Crossroads Planned Development District** (inclusionary area as outlined in Section XX.C.1.B.iv. in the Zoning Ordinance) may be reviewed under the Minor Development Review authority. However, projects in these districts will require Major Development Review from the Planning Board if any one of the thresholds below are met:

- Activities that result in 1-acre or more of disturbance
- Activities that are forecast to generate more than 35 trip ends during any peak hour
- Activities that require amendments to state or federal permits

In addition, the Town Planner may refer approval for any proposed activity to the Planning Board for Major Development Review when the nature of the application warrants a public hearing or poses potential for significant impacts on municipal facilities or natural resources. The applicant may also request a project be reviewed by the Planning Board for any reason.

Major Development Review

Planning Board approval is required for any activity requiring site plan review, except for any activity that may be eligible for Minor Development Review.

Review Process – Minor Development Review

1. Application is submitted to Planning Department with requisite fees/submission requirements. The Town Planner may request additional plans/information and engage professional consultants to review materials, at the applicant's expense.
2. Once application is determined to be complete, the Town Planner distributes applications to the Town Engineer, Zoning Administrator, Fire Department, Police Department, and Public Works Department for review and comments. An interdepartmental review meeting will be held every 3 weeks for Minor Development Review applications.
3. The Planning Department notifies abutters within 500-feet of the proposal, at the applicant's expense.
4. Within 3 days of a regularly scheduled Planning Board meeting, the Town Planner shall review the application under relevant Town ordinances/standards and all submitted comments and act on the application to either: a) send the application to Major Development Review, or b) approve/deny the application.
5. If an application is denied, a substantially similar application shall not be submitted to the Town Planner within 1 year from the date of denial. This can be waived if the Town Planner finds that substantial new evidence exists or an error/mistake of law or misinformation concerning the original application is identified.
6. Any appeal of the Town Planner's decision on an application shall be taken directly to the Planning Board (within 30 days of issuance of decision). The Planning Board will review the project as a Major Development Review.

Review Process – Major Development Review

This review process is unchanged as a result of the Minor development provisions.

Public Notices Procedures for Site Plan Review Applications

Major Development Review (Planning Board Review)

1. Notify abutters within 500-feet of proposal
2. All application materials are available to public in Planning Department
3. Agenda posted to website 10-12 days prior to upcoming Planning Board meeting
4. Agenda posted in Town Hall 10-12 days prior to upcoming Planning Board meeting
5. Agenda includes standing item, "Administrative Review"

Minor Development Review (Administrative Review)

1. Notify abutters within 500-feet of proposal
2. All application materials are available to public in Planning Department
3. Agenda posted to website 10-12 days prior to administrative review
4. Agenda posted in Town Hall 10-12 days prior to upcoming administrative review
5. All Minor Development Review actions will be announced at a Planning Board meeting under the standing agenda item, "Administrative Reviews."