

PLANNING & ZONING DIVISION FAQs

GENERAL:

- What is zoning?** Zoning is the method by which the city regulates how land is used and developed throughout the entire city. This is done by assigning every parcel of land (or "lot") in the city to a particular zoning district and each district allows certain uses and has specific development requirements.
- Where can I go to find out more information about Zoning, related events, or ask questions?** You are always welcome to contact any of the Planning Division staff via phone or email (see Planning Staff page for contact information), or visit the public counter at 250 Constitution Plaza, 4th Floor between 8:30am-12:30pm. We also have updates available on several projects on our Current Projects webpage where you can download previous presentations and find the latest information.
- What does the Planning & Zoning Division do?** Staff in the planning division is responsible for a wide variety of functions. We primarily work with applicants interested in opening businesses and those interested in altering or developing their property to ensure that their proposals meet the requirements of the Zoning Regulations. We also conduct and manage projects across the city to ensure that the goals set forth in Hartford's Plan of Conservation and Development are followed.
- What is zoning enforcement?** While our division ensures that proposals meet the requirements of the zoning regulations, zoning enforcement is the way in which zoning is enforced throughout the city and is handled by a Zoning Enforcement Officer.

COMMON PROJECT QUESTIONS:

- Where can I open my business?** Assuming you have a particular location in mind already, you first need to determine what zoning district it is located in. You can find this out by looking up the Assessor's Property Card for the address. Different zones allow and prohibit different uses - once you know the zone, you can view the Table of Principal Uses (Figure 3.2-A) of the Zoning Regulations to find out if your business is allowed in a particular zone. Be sure to also look at the section referenced for that use to ensure no use-specific conditions apply that might otherwise prevent your proposal.

Am I in a Historic District? What does that mean?

You can go to our Historic Preservation webpage to view the city's Historic Map or the list of historic properties by address. If you are in a Historic District you will first need to fill out a General Planning & Zoning Application (check off the box for Historic Review) and receive approval for the work *before* applying for your Building Permit. Depending on the work proposed, it may be able to be approved by staff or may need to go to one of our historic commissions. Visit the Historic Preservation page for more information.

Can I convert part of my existing home to allow another living unit?

As with other land uses, if you can add another dwelling unit to your home will depend on what zone your located in and if it is allowed. Certain zones are limited to single unit dwellings, others to two-unit, three-unit or multi-units (four or more). The Table of Principal Uses (Figure 3.2-A) of the Zoning Regulations will show you if the use is allowed but additional considerations also need to be taken into account such adequate parking spaces and unit square footage. Also, be aware of applicable Building Codes! Zoning might allow it but building code issues or egress requirements might prevent an additional unit so be sure to consider this beforehand.

APPLICATIONS:

How much does a fee for an application cost?

The fee varies by application which can be found on our Permit Fee Schedule

When do I need a Zoning Permit?

Typically you need to file for a Zoning Permit whenever you are opening a new business or doing work on your property that otherwise does not require a building permit.

When do I need a Zoning Variance?

A Zoning Variance is a special type of application that is needed when you are essentially asking to be excused from certain requirements of the Zoning Regulations. This application requires a special process that involves a public hearing. To file for a variance, you must be able to provide a statement of hardship that is unique to your property (and cannot be financial or self-created). Your hardship statement must demonstrate that the unique situation on your property prevents you from being able to follow the rules of the Zoning Regulations.

When do I need to apply for a Special Permit?

Certain uses are allowed but only by going through the Special Permit process. This ensures that approval of these uses or developments go through a public hearing process, therefore allowing citizens to speak in favor of or in opposition to the proposal. ensuring that the location of certain uses are subject to a public hearing process. These uses are called out with an "o" in the Table of Principal Uses (Figure 3.2-A) of the Zoning Regulations and may also be required if certain use-specific conditions are "triggered," so always check the section referenced in the Table as well.

When do I need to apply for a Liquor Permit?

The liquor permit application is actually an application that is provided by the State. Planning & Zoning is one of several signoffs that are required by the State before you can submit it back to them. There are a wide variety of liquor applications, so you need to ensure you are applying for the right type of permit (for example: Temporary Liquor Permit, Package Store, Grocery Beer, Restaurant Liquor, etc.) and the State Department of Liquor Control is the best entity to check with for this. The City charges \$50 for Temporary permits and \$200 for all other applications. Depending on the type of permit, there may be location restrictions set by the Zoning Regulations - check first before making the investment in a property!