



City of Hopewell Department of Development Site Plan Review Process

This document provides information regarding the requirements to submit a site plan within the City of Hopewell, Virginia. It outlines when a site plan is required and the review process utilized by the City. All site plans must be submitted to the Department of Development located in Suite 321 of the Hopewell Municipal Building, 300 North Main Street, Hopewell, VA 23860. There is a flat fee of \$250 to submit an application. However, if located within three of the City's Enterprise Zone areas, the fee may be waived. To determine if your property is located within the EZ Area contact the Department of Development at (804) 541-2220.

A site plan is required for the following types of development within the City:

1. Uses in any commercial, business, or mixed-use zoning district;
2. Uses in any economic development (industrial) zoning district;
3. Non-residential uses within any residential or mobile home zoning district;
4. Attached or multifamily residential uses within any zoning district;
5. Uses requiring a special use permit in any district;
6. Enlargement of a building which results in changes in onsite parking requirements, provided that such enlargement exceeds twenty-five percent (25%) of the gross floor area of the original building or a gross floor area of 2500 square feet, whichever is less;
7. Uses and facilities which impact wetlands or designated streams and waterways;
8. Installation, extension or change of a public water or sewer main or other public infrastructure requiring a public right of way or dedicated easement to the City of Hopewell;
9. Parking lots intended for either commercial or public use in a residential, commercial or economic development zoning district;
10. Installation or change of a public water or sewer pump facility;
11. Installation or change of a public water storage facility;
12. Installation or change of a public water or sewer treatment facility or installation or change of a private sewer treatment or pretreatment facility;
13. Construction of a new street or extension of an existing street and related infrastructure;
14. Development of a road or street lying within a previously platted public right of way or easement;
15. Construction of a private commercial or industrial road entrance or intersection with an existing or proposed public street;
16. Construction of a retaining wall that abuts or is adjacent to a public right of way, private street, or alley;
17. Any disturbed land areas greater than 5,000 square feet in total land area, except single family detached dwellings and other uses not otherwise located within a designated Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area that are exempted by erosion and sediment control regulations;
18. Any disturbed land areas or land development activity greater than 2500 square feet in total land area located within a designated Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area, including single family detached dwellings; and
19. Enlargement of a parking lot in a residential, commercial or economic development zoning district, increasing parking spaces by more than ten (10) spaces.
20. Any development in a residential, commercial or economic development zoning district in which any required off-street parking space requiring more than ten (10) parking spaces which is to be used by more than one establishment.

Waivers

There are instances where the requirement for a site plan can be waived. Waivers are granted by the Director of Development and the City's Site Plan Review Team that includes Staff from various disciplines such as Engineering, Stormwater, Fire, Emergency Management, Utilities, and Building Inspections.

1. Where it can be clearly established by the applicant that the use will not require the improvements;
2. Where it can be clearly demonstrated by the applicant that a waiver from the requirement to submit a site plan (or a portion thereof) will be in keeping with the intent of Article XVI of the Hopewell Zoning Ordinance provided that the requirement for a Public Improvements Plan required by the Subdivision Ordinance may not be waived;
3. Where it can be clearly shown that the application for a site plan and building permit involves building and safety regulations which are not critical to the purpose and intent of this ordinance;
4. Where it can be clearly established by the applicant that such waiver will not have an adverse effect on (a) the public health, safety, welfare, and convenience, (b) the planning for and provision of adequate public facilities, utilities, drainage, environmental controls, and transportation facilities, (c) preservation of agricultural, forestry and conservation lands, and (d) other relevant considerations related to the Comprehensive Plan;
5. If not located in the Chesapeake Bay Preservation area, temporary construction trailers when located on construction sites and removed at the completion of construction;
6. If not located in the Chesapeake Bay Preservation area, temporary modular classrooms used by public or private schools for no longer than one (1) year. At the expiration of one (1) year from the date of initial occupancy, the owner shall either discontinue the use or the use shall no longer be exempt from the site plan process;
7. If not located in the Chesapeake Bay Preservation area, temporary modular offices for no longer than one (1) year. At the expiration of one (1) year from the date initial occupancy, the owner shall either discontinue the use or the use shall no longer be exempt from the site plan process;
8. Notwithstanding the above, no site plan waiver shall be granted for any land disturbing or development activity located within a designated Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area;
9. Where it can be shown that any change in, or expansion of, a use meets all of the following criteria:
 - a. Such change or expansion does not create additional parking as required by the parking standards in Article XVI of the Zoning Ordinance;
 - b. No additional ingress/egress to a public street or change in ingress/egress is required by the Director of Development based on intensification or use.
 - c. No additional ingress/egress or alteration of existing ingress/egress is proposed.
 - d. Disturbed area is less than 5000 square feet in area.
 - e. It has been verified in writing by the Director of Development that availability and connection to water and sewer are attainable.
 - f. All requirements of the subdivision ordinance have been met.

How to submit a Waiver from the Site Plan Requirements?

- An applicant seeking a waiver from a requirement to submit a concept plan or a site plan (or any portion thereof) shall provide written documentation to the Director of Development addressing all of the applicable above conditions for waiver.
- Subject to the scope and impact of the requested waiver, the Director of Development and the City's Site Plan Review Team may either act upon the waiver request, or refer the waiver request and applicant's supporting documentation to the Planning Commission for action at its next regularly scheduled meeting.
- The applicant shall be notified in writing by the Director of Development within ten (10) business days upon action by either the Director of Development or the Planning Commission.
- Notwithstanding any grant of waiver by the Director of Development or the Planning Commission, the applicant is required to show evidence of having obtained a building permit, erosion and sediment control permit, subdivision ordinance approval, other applicable State or Federal permits, and, upon completion of improvements, a certificate of occupancy.

Pre-Application Conference and Concept Plan:

A Pre-Application Conference and Concept Plan shall be submitted by the applicant prior to undertaking the formal application process for a site plan. The goal of the pre-application conference is to identify, understand and anticipate key planning issues and site-related design issues which may be deemed relevant by the City.

The applicant must contact the City Department of Development to schedule a pre-application conference. The concept plan must be provided at the pre-application conference.

The concept plan is intended to graphically depict and communicate the primary elements of an applicant's proposed project. It is not intended to be a detailed engineering document and may be generalized in nature. It provides the opportunity for the applicant and the City to review and provide preliminary feedback on the key physical elements of a project that are of mutual interest and relevance to health, safety, and welfare.

Five (5) copies of the concept plan and any supporting documentation shall be submitted to the Director of Development at least ten (10) business days prior to the scheduled date of the Pre-Application Conference. See the pre-application checklist for the items required on a concept plan.

Site Plan Submittal

After the concept plan meeting, and the applicant understands the requirements of the City, a site plan can be submitted. Eight (8) copies of the site plan and a digital file (pdf preferred) shall be submitted to the Department of Development. The plan shall be accompanied by payment of fees for review and processing. The fee shall be based on a fee schedule as may be adopted and modified from time to time by the City Council.

The site plan will be reviewed to determine if it is complete. If it is found to be complete it will be forwarded to all necessary reviewing agencies and staff within five (5) business days of submittal, at which time the applicant's submittal shall be deemed "substantially complete and accepted for review." The applicant shall be notified of this finding in writing.

Site plans and public improvements plans which lack any information required by this Article, the City adopted design and construction standards and the Site Plan Checklist, and which are not consistent with the proceedings of the Pre-Application Conference shall be deemed to be incomplete and shall be rejected by the Director of Development within five (5) business days of submittal, at which time the applicant's submittal shall be deemed "incomplete and rejected" and the reasons for rejection clearly provided. Further review of the submission shall be suspended.

To assure the public safety and general welfare, no site plan shall be approved unless and until the City is assured that the following improvements and minimum design criteria will be implemented as required. Detailed criteria can be found in Article XVI. Section F. Minimum Site Plan Design and Construction Standards.

- Street Construction and Design
- Parking, Loading and Site Access
- Sidewalk and Pedestrian Walkways
- Lots and Yards
- Easements
- Hydrologic and Hydraulic Analysis
- Storm Drainage Systems and Stormwater Management
- Water Systems
- Sewer Systems
- Street Lights, Site Lighting and Electrical Facilities
- Erosion and Sedimentation Control Measures
- Retaining Walls and Other Structural Improvements

Site Plan Review

An initial review of the applicant's site plan will be made to determine the completeness and general compliance with the information requirements of this ordinance.

Site plans which contain information required by this Article, and which are consistent with the proceedings of the Pre-Application Conference, shall be deemed to be complete and shall be forwarded to all necessary reviewing agencies and staff within five (5) business days of submittal, at which time the applicant's submittal shall be deemed "substantially complete and accepted for review." The applicant shall be

notified of this finding in writing.

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Timeline for Review of the Site Plan

1. Within ten (10) business days after acceptance of a site plan which has been determined to be "substantially complete and accepted for review", the reviewing staff and agencies will be issued a copy of the site plan for review and comment on the technical compliance with Article XVI. of the Hopewell Zoning Ordinance.
2. All reviews and comments shall be completed within thirty (30) business days from the date of issuance of the site plan for review. Review comments shall be provided in writing to the Director of Development, who shall be responsible for preparing a site plan review report with recommendations for approval, approval with conditions, or disapproval within fourteen (14) business days after receipt of all staff and agency comments.
3. Site plan review meeting: Prior to notifying the applicant of review comments, the Director of Development, at its discretion, may determine the need for a site plan review meeting with appropriate staff and agencies for the purpose of clarifying and coordinating site plan review comments. Such meeting shall be conducted within the thirty (30) day period above mentioned for administrative site review. If a meeting is to be held, the Director of Development shall be responsible for notifying the applicant and adjoining property owners of the time, date, and location of the meeting.
4. It shall be the responsibility of invited Staff and agency representatives to attend the site plan review meeting upon invitation by the Director of Development. Staff and agency representatives may be invited from amongst the following agencies and departments: City Manager's Office, City Attorney, Public Works, City Engineer, Economic Development, Building Official, Planning, GIS, Fire Marshall, Police Chief, and others deemed essential for the completion of the review and coordination process.
5. Notice to applicant: Upon receipt by the Director of Development, the applicant shall be provided with all review comments and recommendations.
6. In cases where site plan revisions, deletions, or additions are necessary, the applicant shall be so notified, in writing, within fourteen (14) business days after receipt of all staff and agency comments

7. In cases where no site plan revisions, deletions, or additions are necessary the applicant shall be so notified, in writing, of the terms and conditions of plan approval by the Director of Development within fourteen (14) business days.
8. Revisions by applicant: Upon receipt of comments, the site plan or public improvements plan shall be revised by the applicant to comply with all review comments and requirements. The applicant shall submit such revisions together with any required re-submittal fee. Where the revised site plan does not include all requested or required revisions, the applicant will be notified that the site plan review process shall not proceed until the requested or required revisions are complete. Site plans requiring only minor revisions will be reviewed within fourteen (14) business days upon resubmission. Plans requiring substantial revisions will be reviewed on the time frame of a new submission. The Director of Development shall determine if a revision is minor or substantial.

Notification of site plan matters to the general public

Ten (10) business days prior to the scheduled Site Plan Review Conference for any site plan, the Director of Development shall place a notice of the site plan application (i) on the property by placement of a sign with a reference number and contact information to the Department of Development. and (ii) on the City website.

Approval/Denial of a Site Pan

- A. A site plan will be approved by the Director of Development, City Engineer and the Stormwater Program Manager if: (1) it demonstrates substantial compliance with this ordinance with Article XVI., Site Plans, of the Hopewell Zoning Ordinance (2) adheres to site design criteria set forth in this Article and the City's approved design and construction standards, Development Standards (Article XVIII) and other ordinances, (3) provides evidence that all additional required local, state, and federal permits have been approved and obtained, and (4) the public facilities, utilities and site designs as designed will be able to function in a manner beneficial to the health, safety and general welfare of the public.
- B. Under certain conditions approval by other agencies not specifically referred to hereinabove shall be a prerequisite to approval by the City.
- C. In denying a site plan or public improvements plan, specific reasons shall be provided. Reasons for denial shall relate in general terms to such modifications or corrections as will permit approval of the site plan.