

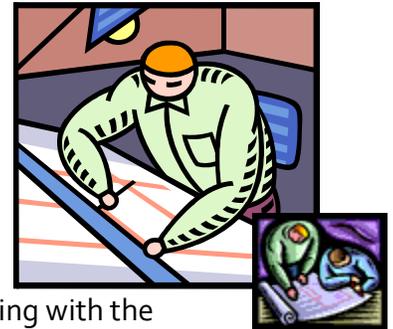
Town of Reading Site Plan Review Basics

Reading Site Plan Review considerations include:

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| • Emergency Vehicles | • Pedestrian and vehicle safety |
| • Utilities | • Maintain scenic views |
| • Retain trees | • Screen with landscaping or fencings |
| • Protect slopes | • Light intrusion |
| • Stone walls | • Architectural character and building scale |
| • Wetland plants | • Compliance with Zoning By-Laws |
| • Stormwater control | • Landscaping and site amenities |
| • Soil erosion | • Impact on neighbors |
| • Control air and water pollution | • Groundwater contamination |

What is Site Plan Review?

Site Plans show the layout, design, and construction of buildings, structures, and paving on a site in a way that protects the public's interest in safety and economy, and protects from some of the possible bad outcomes of site development. Flooding, light glare, erosion, traffic hazards, obstruction of scenic views, noise, traffic, trash, contamination or aesthetic problems sometimes affect the area adjacent to development. The Site Plan Review procedure gives a community some control over development impacts by working with the property owner or building to shape the development in the best manner possible, and place certain conditions on the development. The purpose of Site Plan Review is to promote development that will be beneficial to the community and to protect the community from potential harmful impacts, by determining the most appropriate use of the land consistent with the Zoning By-Law and the Reading Master Plan.



What does CPDC look for?

The Reading Zoning By-Laws (Section 4.3.3.6) tells the CPDC and the property owner that Site Plans and the CPDC's written Decision must specifically ensure:

1. Adequate provision of access for fire and services equipment
2. Adequate provision for utilities and stormwater drainage
3. Minimize cut and fill of slopes
4. Minimize tree removal of 6" caliper trees or larger
5. Minimize length or removal of stone walls
6. Minimize wetland vegetation removal
7. Minimize stormwater flow from the site



8. Minimize soil erosion
9. Minimize the threat of air and water pollution
10. Minimize groundwater contamination from on-site disposal or hazardous substances
11. Maximize pedestrian and vehicle safety
12. Minimize obstruction of scenic views
13. Screen parking, storage and outdoor service areas through landscaping or fencing
14. Minimize headlight and other light intrusion
15. Ensure that the character, materials and scale of buildings is not an “unreasonable departure” from the area
16. Ensure compliance with the Reading Zoning By-Laws
17. Maximize property enhancement with landscaping and other site amenities
18. Minimize impacts on adjacent property through hours of operation, deliveries, noise, rubbish removal and storage.

Development that Requires Site Plan Review

Site Plan Review applies to most construction that is not a one or two-family house. Specifically,

1. construction, exterior alteration or exterior expansion of, or changes of use within an institutional, commercial, industrial, or multi-family structure with four or more dwelling units, and
2. the construction or expansion of a parking lot for an institutional, commercial, industrial, or multi-family structure.

Site Plan approval must be obtained before a building permit is issued.



Exemptions:

1. The construction is solely for the maintenance or repair of the existing structure;
2. The construction, expansion or alteration of a building or structure does not exceed five hundred (500) gross square feet, or such alteration involves interior renovation of less than two thousand (2,000) gross square feet;
3. The construction, expansion or alteration only involves the modification of internal electrical, plumbing or mechanical systems.

How Long Does it Take to get approval of a Site Plan?

Once a complete application is received, an application for Site Plan review is usually heard within five weeks. A legal notice has to be published and abutting property owners must be notified by mail two weeks before the meeting. A minor project can be decided in one meeting if enough information is provided about the project and

the concerns listed above are all addressed. Larger developments, for example the construction of a few store or restaurant from the ground up, may take two or three meetings or more. The CPDC usually meets the second and fourth Monday of the month except for holidays and during Town Meeting months.

How long it is good for?

A Site Plan Decision will lapse after 2 years unless “a substantial use” of it has not been made, except for good cause.

Can an approved Site Plan Decision be changed later?

Yes. The CPDC will consider application for minor modification or major modifications to approved Site Plans, and issue a written Decision, with or without conditions.

Can I meet informally first?

Applicants are invited and encouraged to submit a sketch plan to the CPDC for comment before applying for a Site Plan Review. Applicants are also encouraged to meet with Town Staff for a Development Review Team (DRT) meeting so that staff may comment early to advise on best approaches to site design and permitting.

For More Information

Visit the website at www.ci.reading.ma.us and click on “Departments,” then click on “Planning,” then click on “Zoning By-Law” link and Site Plan Review is located in Section 4.3.3.

Applications for Site Plan Review are available in the Community Services Department at Town Hall and can be downloaded from the Town’s website.

Applicants or potential applicants are encouraged to discuss their concept plans with Town Staff (the Town Planner – 781-942-6612) as soon as possible. This will expedite the process and make the best use of resources.