

## Site Plan Application Guideline

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### Purpose of the Guideline

The purpose of this guideline is to help applicants through the process of making an application to the City of Stratford for Site Plan Approval. The guideline includes background information on the City's Service Philosophy, along with the need for site plan approvals and their relationship to the Zoning By-law and Official Plan. The guideline also sets out the application requirements and provides a step by step outline of the Site Plan Approval process from initial application to final approval.

### Service Philosophy

Our *commitment* is to the community;  
Our *duty* is to policy and practice;  
Our *goal* is knowledgeable solution-orientated service!

Specifically:

- We will **work in partnership** with applicants and their representatives to find solutions to any challenges that may arise in the development process provided that such solutions do not conflict with the public interest.
- We **support safe, accessible well-planned, well-constructed development** in support of the City's strategic objectives and Official Plan and that recognizes the unique character of this community.
- We will **protect the public interest** through the effective assessment and management of risk and through the enhancement of the social, economic and environmental character of the city.
- We are committed to the City developing in a **progressive, timely and orderly manner**.
- We will **coordinate our responses, demonstrate clear and effective communications** and provide **timely decisions**.
- We are committed to **continuously improving** the process. If one of us believes a city policy or practice does not serve the public interest, we will propose changes to that policy or practice.
- We will also work to **keep abreast of improvements in other municipalities** and incorporate changes which we feel are applicable to Stratford into our processes.

## **Getting site plan approval for your project**

Site Plans and Site Plan Agreements are designed to protect the interests of all parties: the public, the city and the builder. The Site Plan Approval process promotes functional and attractive development, while minimizing adverse impacts on the surrounding land uses.

### **What is a Site Plan?**

A Site Plan is a drawing, or set of drawings, illustrating the physical arrangement of property improvements such as buildings, driveways, parking areas, pedestrian sidewalks, landscaping, fences, light fixtures, grading, drains and municipal services.

### **What is Site Plan Approval?**

Site Plan Approval and the registering of a Site Plan Agreement is completed prior to the issuance of a building permit. It is an interactive process involving both the property owner and City staff to match the property owner's requirements with both the unique characteristics of each property and municipal development standards.

### **What types of development require Site Plan Approval?**

In Stratford, all commercial, institutional, industrial and residential developments (except for single, semi-detached, duplex and triplex dwelling units) are subject to site plan approval, along with commercial parking lots. Additions or building use changes that substantially increase or change the usability of the building are also subject to site plan approval if they are for commercial, institutional or industrial uses. Additions to apartments or group townhouses that result in additional dwelling units are also subject to site plan approval.

### **Who completes a Site Plan Approval?**

A multi-disciplinary Site Plan Review Committee, made up of city staff works through the site plan approval process with the applicant. Final approval of the Site Plan Agreement may require a City Council resolution. The City of Stratford Site Plan Review Committee is made up of members from the following departments:

- Development Services Department
- Engineering & Public Works Department
- Economic Development Department
- Festival Hydro
- Community Services Department
- Fire Department

### **What does the Site Plan Review Committee do?**

This group encourages an integrated approach to site planning undertaken in the early stages of design. The Site Plan Review Committee represents the public interest with both functional and aesthetic concerns respecting matters such as traffic circulation, public safety, night lighting, pedestrian walkways, municipal services, drainage, flood protection,

environmental quality, waste management, noise abatement, privacy screening and landscape design. The Site Plan Review Committee contributes to the project by:

- identifying issues influencing design decisions at an early stage of the design,
- ensuring zoning by-law conformity,
- helping property owners identify the physical opportunities and constraints of their property,
- providing guidance in the most efficient use of the property to meet the functional needs of the owner,
- ensuring future compatibility of the development within the context of the neighbouring properties,
- coordinating the requirements of other agencies and departments that have jurisdiction, and;
- providing a forum for sharing information and negotiating a "win/win" resolution of site planning issues.

### **What are types of drawings and reports are required for the Site Plan Application?**

All plans and drawings submitted in accordance with a site plan agreement application shall be prepared by a registered professional architect or professional engineer and, where appropriate, an Ontario Land Surveyor. Further information concerning drawing requirements is listed in the *Site Plan Application Form*.

A Record of Site Condition (RSC) may be required prior to site plan approval in accordance with Section 3.5 of the City of Stratford Official Plan.

The scale of the development may require that various studies be submitted with the application to allow for the evaluation of the proposed development. These studies may include but are not limited to:

- Servicing Studies
- Noise and Vibration Studies
- Traffic Impact Studies
- Planning Impact Studies
- Record of Site Condition (RSC)

Contact the Development Services Division prior to submitting your application to determine if additional studies will be required.

### **What are the steps for Site Plan Approval in Stratford?**

**Step 1 Pre-consult with members of the Site Plan Review Committee:** Staff are available to explain the process, indicate the feasibility of the proposed development and may be able to point out any special considerations for the property. Preliminary or conceptual Site Plan drawings should also be reviewed at this point in order to identify potential problems early in the process

**Step 2 Complete and submit the Site Plan Application and Site Plan Application Fee:** The required drawings as listed in the Site Plan Application will be required at this point for circulation to the Site Plan Review Committee members.

**Note:** The Site Plan Review Committee meets at 9:00am in the Falstaff Room, 2nd Floor, 82 Erie Street on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of every month. Drawings to be reviewed by the Committee must be submitted to the Development Services Division 2-weeks prior to the scheduled meeting in order for them to be circulated and reviewed by the Committee members.

**Site Plan Application Fee:** Call the Development Services Division at 519-271-0250 X 5345.

**Step 3 Meet with the Site Plan Review Committee:** Applications are reviewed for compliance with the applicable regulations of the zoning by-law, circulated to the necessary City Departments and outside agencies and scheduled for consideration by the Site Plan Review Committee. Applicants are invited to attend and participate in the Site Plan Review Committee meeting. The outcome of the meeting includes feedback and a list of requirements/revisions needed for the Committee to recommend approval. These requirements/revisions are specific to each property and may include items such as a tree preservation report, an environmental audit, traffic study, dedication of land for road widening, stormwater management plans, noise impact analysis, shared driveways with abutting properties and special screening requirements.

**Step 3 Make any Required Revisions to the Site Plan Information:** The applicant finalizes the site layout plan (including any revisions requested by the Site Plan Review Committee) and completes the list of requirements set out by the Group. This includes a detailed landscape design and site-engineering design based on the finalized site layout plan. City staff reviews the completed information and any required revisions to this information are provided to the applicant for further submission.

Final approval of the site plan will require the applicant to enter into a Site Plan Agreement with the City of Stratford. Prior to drafting of the site plan agreement, the applicant is required to submit a current property identifier

**Step 5 Finalize the Approval:** As per the Site Plan Agreement, the applicant is required to complete and submit the Site Plan Application Itemized Cost Estimate Form. This form will be reviewed by the City to determine if the cost estimate is accurate. The applicant will then be required to provide securities to the City in the amount of 50% of the total shown on the Itemized Cost Estimate Form. If the applicant provides the City with a letter of credit for the securities, the letter of credit must include an automatic renewal clause.

After the required revisions have been made and the Development Services Division has been provided with the appropriate securities and a signed site plan agreement, the Site Plan Review Committee recommends the site plan for final approval.

### **How long does it take to complete an approval?**

Depending upon the scale, complexity and information requirements of an application, the approval process may be completed in 4-8 weeks.

- Note: Key components to how quickly an application is processed are the applicant's ability to meet drawing submission deadlines and the speed at which revisions can be made.
- Note: When development is proposed on or adjacent to a property that is known to be, suspected to be, or could potentially be a contaminated site, the owner shall be required to submit a Record of Site Condition as part of the site plan approval process.

### **Is there an appeal process?**

Objections to or the refusal of an application may be appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board only by the applicant.

### **When can I apply for a Building Permit?**

To expedite the process applicants can submit a Building Permit Application congruently with their Site Plan Application. However, the Building Permit will not be issued until the Site Plan Agreement has been approved and registered on title.

### **When will a Building Permit be Issued?**

Once the final site plan approval has been completed the agreement is sent to the Mayor for signing and is then sent to the Land Titles Office for registration on title.

Once the Development Services Division has received notification that the Site Plan Agreement has been registered on title, the building permit may be issued.

### **At what point will the performance security be released?**

Upon the completion of the site development work, the applicant must submit a final as built survey for approval of the Engineering and Public Works Department. City staff will then inspect the property, and determine if all of the conditions of the Site Plan Agreement have been met. Once the final as built survey has been submitted and a final site inspection completed and approved, the Development Services Division will authorize the release of the securities.

### **What are some key things to remember?**

- The Site Plan Review Committee meetings are scheduled for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays of each month.
- Applicants wishing to have their submissions reviewed by the Committee must have their application form, drawings and fee submitted to the City of Stratford Development Services Division 2 weeks prior to the scheduled meeting.
- Final Site Plan Approval and Approval to enter into a Site Plan Agreement must be given by City Council. Stratford City Council meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month. Applicants wishing to have their Site Plans listed on a Council agenda must have their final revised drawings, property identifier and signed agreement submitted to the City of Stratford Development Services Division 1 week before the scheduled Council meeting.

### **How can I get more information?**

For more detailed information on Site Plan Review Committee or the Site Plan Approval process, call the Development Services Division at (519) 271-0250 (ext. 5345), or visit us in our offices at 82 Erie Street or fax us at (519) 271-5966.