

City of Taunton Business and Development Guide



A user-friendly guide to permitting and development for business owners, residents, and others seeking to do work in the City of Taunton.

Prepared by:
City of Taunton Office of Economic & Community Development

Acknowledgments

This Business and Development Guide would not have been possible without the support, input, and local knowledge provided by the City of Taunton’s professional staff and leadership. The City would also like to acknowledge the following for their role in preparing this document:

City of Taunton Mayor’s Office

***City of Taunton Office of Economic
and Community Development***

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A Message from the Mayor



The City of Taunton thanks you for being a valued resident, business owner, or potential new developer. We designed this Guide with you in mind to ensure an efficient, streamlined, and 21st century user-based permitting and licensing experience. Our City is a wonderful place to live, to work, and to invest in, for many reasons and we thank you for choosing the City of Taunton!

Sincerely,

Mayor Shaunna O'Connell

Key Contacts

Building Department

508-821-1015

<https://www.taunton-ma.gov/building-department>

Areas of focus: Building permit, certificate of occupancy, code compliance, flood zone, historic regulations

City Clerk

508-821-1024

<https://www.taunton-ma.gov/rose-marie-blackwell-city-clerk>

Areas of focus: Business certificate, yard sale permit, second hand vending and salvage, marriage, dog license

Planning and Conservation Department

Director of Planning

508-821-1051

Conservation Agent

508-821-1095

<https://www.taunton-ma.gov/planning-and-conservation-department>

Areas of focus: Site plan review, wetlands, stormwater, zoning, subdivision control, site plan review

Board of Health

508-821-1400

<https://www.taunton-ma.gov/health-department>

Areas of focus: New restaurants, septic, waste

License Commission

508-821-1037

<https://www.taunton-ma.gov/license-commission>

Areas of focus: Alcohol and common victualler licenses, entertainment, vending, and amusement device licenses

Fire Prevention

Fire Prevention Officer

508-821-1453

<https://www.taunton-ma.gov/fire-department>

Areas of focus: Fire inspections, burning permits

Department of Public Works

Commissioner

508-821-1431

<https://www.taunton-ma.gov/department-public-works>

Areas of focus: Road opening, sewer/water, etc.

Police Department

Business Line

508-824-7522

<https://tauntonpd.com/>

Areas of focus: firearms, soliciting, auctioneering, automobile junkyard

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Part 1: Resources for New Businesses

Congratulations on embarking on your new business endeavor with the City of Taunton! We are here to help you get started.

Part 1 of this guide deals with resources to establish your business enterprise. Each page of this guide outlines the relevant considerations for various types of businesses, including necessary permits, required licenses, funding options, and other items to consider when opening your new business. This portion of the guide addresses common questions for various types of businesses that you might consider opening in Taunton and provides more detailed information pertaining to common documents for opening these businesses.

Part 2 of the guide covers any requirements associated with new construction or modifications to a physical property for businesses and individuals in Taunton.

Starting Your Business



Creating my business:

On the next page, you will find a list of steps to follow when getting your new business off the ground. This first section contains information on any necessary permits, considerations for the location of your establishment, and requirements for specific services of your business.

Starting Your Business



Business Certificate

If you would like to start a business as any other name other than your own, you must obtain a **Business Certificate**. Your first step is to obtain a zoning compliance form through the City Planner, which is required of every business in the City.

Is my business permitted in this property's zoning district?

Check with the Planning and Conservation Department to determine the zoning district location of your land and whether your proposed use is permitted in this area. Restaurants, retail, office, and many other business uses are permitted by right in the City's Business, Central Business, and Highway Business districts.



Special Permit

Check to see if the use you are planning requires a **Special Permit** in the zoning district where the property is located.



Alcohol

If you are planning to serve alcohol, you will need an **Alcoholic Beverage License** approved at both the local and state level.



Additional Amusement and Entertainment Machines

If you are planning to provide additional amusement, via features such as vending machines, you will need a license from the Taunton Police Department. Amusement and Entertainment machine licenses, issued through the Board of License Commissioners, are non-transferable. The City Clerk issues licenses for billiards tables.



Contact

Planning and Conservation Department

Director of Planning
508-821-1051

[Department Website](#)

City Clerk

508-821-1024

[Department Website](#)

Building Department

Building Commissioner
508-821-1015

[Department Website](#)

Police Department

Business Line
508-824-7522

[Department Website](#)

References

[Taunton is Open for Business](#)

[City of Taunton Fee Schedule*](#)

*Fees noted in the schedule may not be pro-rated; the full fee is due regardless of application date.

1st

2nd

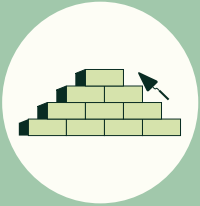
Starting Your Business



Establishing a physical presence for my business:

This next section outlines the requirements for businesses that wish to maintain a physical presence, such as a storefront, food vending location, office space, or any other similar type of establishment. The below list includes necessary permits to establish and operate a building for business purposes, as well as considerations for site features that business owners may want to incorporate.

Starting Your Business



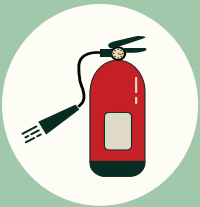
Building Permit

A **Building Permit** is required in order to construct, enlarge, alter, remodel, remove, demolish or change the occupancy or use of a building.



Certificate of Occupancy

If a building permit is required, you will need a Certificate of Occupancy once the work is completed. You must obtain this prior to opening your establishment. Check with the Building Department for the current Occupancy Certificate, in order to determine if it is the same as the proposed use.



Fire Prevention

The Fire Department conducts inspections for fire safety purposes. These inspections look at protocols for smoke detectors, fire truck access, combustible fluids, and more.



Parking

Each use has a parking requirement. Various factors, depending on the zoning district and use, determine the required number of spaces. The Taunton Zoning Code's Table of Off-Street Parking Regulations, in the Zoning Ordinance, details these requirements.



Signage

Signs require a building permit from the Building Department and must also comply with the setback, size, and design requirements of the zoning district.



Site Plan Review

If the land disturbance for development, redevelopment, or expansion impacts impervious paving, traffic, parking, dimensional requirements, or other facets of site development, you may need to participate in a **Site Plan Review**.

Contact

Planning and Conservation Department

Director of Planning
508-821-1051

[Department Website](#)

1st

Building Department

Building Commissioner
508-821-1015

[Department Website](#)

2nd

Fire Prevention

Fire Prevention Officer
508-821-1453

[Department Website](#)

References

Parking Requirements

City of Taunton Zoning Code Article 7 §440-704

Signage Requirements

City of Taunton Zoning Code Article 7 §440-706

[Fire Prevention Forms](#)

Business Certificate



What is a business certificate?

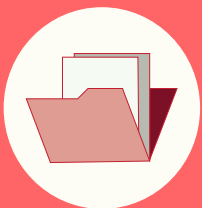
A Business Certificate is the public registration of the name and address of the owner(s) of a business, also known as "DBA" ("Doing Business As") or "Sole Proprietorship." It primarily addresses consumer protection and public information. Lenders will typically request a copy of your business certificate.

Business Certificate



Who must file a Business Certificate?

If you are conducting business in the Commonwealth under a title other than your real name, you must file a certificate with the City Clerk in every city or town where an office of the business is located. A Business Certificate is not required if a corporation is doing business in its true corporate name, or if a partnership is doing business under any title which includes the true surname of any partner. Businesses that file with the Secretary of State's Office do not need to file with the City.



How do I file a Business Certificate?

A Business Certificate can be obtained at the City Clerk's office. The Planning and Conservation Department can verify any requests regarding your business's zoning compliance. If you are using your residence as your place of business or your business address, you must fill out the required form; more information on this topic in the **Operating a Business from Home** section.



What if my business moves out of the City?

File a "Withdrawal from Business" form available at the City Clerk's office. This should be done as soon as possible, as personal property taxes on your business cannot be adjusted until the Assessor receives your form. It is effective from the date that you file a "Withdrawal from Business" form, not on the date you ended your business. You should file this form before your Business Certificate's expiration date.



Does filing prevent others from operating under the same name?

No. The protection of a trademark (word, name, symbol, or device) in Massachusetts is accomplished through the Secretary of State's Office.

Contact

City Clerk

508-821-1024

[Department Website](#)

Planning and Conservation Department

Director of Planning

508-821-1051

[Department Website](#)

References

Trademarks, Names, and Registration Thereof

Massachusetts General Law
CH. 110 §§5, 6

[MA Secretary of State](#)

Operating a Business from Home



What is Home Occupation?

A home occupation is a business conducted from a resident's home. The business is secondary to the use of the building for dwelling purposes. In order to be eligible to operate a business from home, the business must adhere to specific requirements designated for Home Occupation.

Operating a Business From Home

Which Businesses May Want to Operate From Home?



Businesses located in Rural Residential, Urban Residential, and Suburban Residential Districts, as well as those properties, located in a business district, that are used residentially, may choose to operate an accessory business use in a Residence.

Consulting work, graphic design, or jewelry-making represent examples of home-based businesses that are allowed by-right; as long as no face-to-face business is conducted from the home; if there is one or fewer vehicles weighing 7,500 lbs or less associated with business at the house; and if there are no exterior features of the building that suggest a commercial enterprise, including signs or advertising. A home occupation has no more effect on an adjacent property than a normal residential use.

How do I get started?



All residents who wish to run a business from their home should visit the Planning and Conservation Department to fill out an “Accessory Business Use in Residence” form to determine whether your business qualifies as an accessory Business in a Residence. If your home occupation is allowed, you will also need to apply for a **Business Certificate** with the City Clerk.

Contact

Planning and Conservation Department

1st

Director of Planning
508-821-1051
[Department Website](#)

City Clerk

2nd

508-821-1024
[Department Website](#)

References

Form and Checklist for Establishing an Accessory Business Use in a Residence

Opening a New Restaurant



Establishing my Restaurant:

*Restaurants are allowed by-right in Taunton's Business District, Central Business District, and Highway Business District and with a special permit in the Industrial District. You will need a **Business Certificate** from the Office of the City Clerk and a Common Victualler License. Common Victualler Licenses are issued by the City's Board of License Commissioners.*

Opening a New Restaurant



Business Certificate

If you would like to start a business as any other name, other than your own, your first step is to obtain a **Business Certificate**.

Is my business permitted in this property's zoning district?

Check with the Planning and Conservation Department to determine which zoning district your location is in and whether your proposed use is permitted. Restaurants are permitted within the Business, Central Business, and Highway Business Districts. Restaurants are permitted, with a special permit, in Taunton's Industrial District.



Food Establishment Permit

To operate a business that sells prepackaged or prepared food items, you must obtain Board of Health approval. The Sanitary Inspector must conduct a plan review for new businesses with new owners, or remodeled facilities. This plan review is a packet that you will submit to the Board of Health with your initial application. All initial applications require an inspection before establishments can open. Once approved, you must renew the operating permit annually prior to December 1st. Please note that other Board of Health permits may be necessary for your business, such as, but not limited to, Hazardous Materials, milk, retail food, etc.



Alcohol

If you are planning to serve alcohol, you will need an **Alcoholic Beverage License** approved at both the local and state level.



Contact

Board of Health

Director

508-821-1400

[Department Website](#)

Planning and Conservation Department

Director of Planning

508-821-1051

[Department Website](#)

References

[Taunton Health Department Services](#)

[Temporary Food Establishment Packet](#)

**The Board of Health issues many permits related to health and safety, which are not covered in this guide.*

Please consult the Board of Health for information on any related permits.

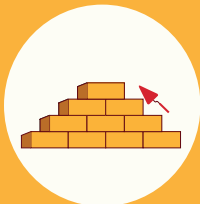
Opening a New Restaurant



Establishing a physical presence for my restaurant:

This next section outlines the requirements to establish and maintain a physical presence for your restaurant. This list includes necessary permits to establish and operate a building for business purposes, as well as considerations for site features that business owners may want to incorporate.

Opening a New Restaurant



Building Permit

To construct, enlarge, alter, remodel, remove, demolish or change the occupancy or use of a building, a **Building Permit** is required.



Certificate of Occupancy

If a building permit is required, you will need a certificate of occupancy once all the work has been completed.



Site Plan Review

If you are developing a restaurant in one of the districts where the City permits restaurants by right (Business District, Central Business District, and Highway Business District), you may need to participate in the **Site Plan Review** process. To establish a restaurant in the Industrial District, you will need to apply for a **Special Permit**.



Will my restaurant have a drive-through window?

Drive-through windows require a **Special Permit** from the Planning Board.



Will there be enough parking?

Parking requirements for restaurants vary, depending on the zoning district in which the establishment will be located.



Am I planning to put up a new sign?

Signs require a building permit from the Building Department and must comply with the setback, size, and design requirements outlined in the Zoning Code.

Contact

Planning and Conservation Department

1st

Director of Planning
508-821-1051
[Department Website](#)

Building Department

2nd

Building Commissioner
508-821-1015
[Department Website](#)

References

Parking Requirements

City of Taunton Zoning Code Article 7 §440-704

Fire Prevention Forms

Serving and Selling Alcohol



What is an alcoholic beverage license?

An alcoholic beverage license is required for establishments handling alcoholic beverages, including retail pouring or package sales. Any business that sells, stores, distributes, serves or delivers alcohol must have an alcoholic beverage license.

Serving and Selling Alcohol

Who oversees alcoholic beverage licensing?



Most alcoholic beverage licenses must be approved by both the local License Commission and the Massachusetts Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC). The local Commission ultimately issues licenses for restaurants and retail licenses. ABCC has sole issuing authority for manufacturers, wholesalers, import/exporters, and caterers.

How can I obtain an Alcoholic Beverage License?



The application process varies for each type of license. The City issues a limited number of licenses – check for availability before applying. State fees are payable to the ABCC with the application. Once the license is approved locally, the City requires a license fee. Applicants for a new retail alcoholic beverage license follow two steps:

Application and Public Hearing



First, complete the online application on ABCC's website, print and sign it, conduct a background check with the Police Department, and submit the fee. Then submit this application to the local Licensing Commission, which will post it as an agenda item for the next public hearing. You will need to be present at the hearing.

Local and State Review



Next, the Commission will review your application and, if approved, forward it to the ABCC. Once approved by the ABCC, the Commission will issue the alcoholic beverage license upon submission of the licensing fee.

Timeframe for Review and Final Steps



Your permit must be renewed annually. Changes to the license, including transferring it, appointing a new manager, or altering the premises, require a new application and review. If you stop operating the business, you must give up your license. If you plan to temporarily suspend your business operations, you must provide at least 10 days notice to the Commission.

Contact

License Commission

508-821-1037

[Department Website](#)

1st

Police Department

Business Line

508-824-7522

[Department Website](#)

2nd

References

Massachusetts General Law Ch. 138 (Alcoholic Liquors)

[City of Taunton Rules and Regulations Relative to Alcoholic Beverage Licenses and Entertainment](#)

[City of Taunton Fee Schedule*](#)

[ABCC Forms](#)

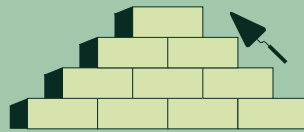
*Fees noted in the schedule may not be pro-rated; the full fee is due regardless of application date.

Part 2: Permits for New Construction or Building Modifications

Congratulations on your new development project! We are here to help you navigate the regulatory process.

This portion of the guide covers requirements associated with new construction or modifications to a physical property for businesses and individuals in Taunton. This includes information for permits and procedures to enable construction of a building; information relating to zoning regulations for a project; steps related to the design and engineering process; and provisions for environmental or dimensional considerations during your new construction or modification of a property.

Obtaining a Building Permit

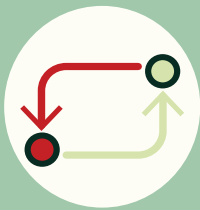


What is a building permit?

Building permits apply to licensed contractors and property owners, in order to enable construction work. Projects that include construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair, removal, or demolition of a structure; change of use or occupancy of a building or structure; or installation or alteration of any equipment that is regulated by the State Building Code require these permits. The Building Commissioner and Plans Examiner review and issue permits.

Obtaining a Building Permit

What is the difference between change of occupancy and change of use?



A change of occupancy permit is required for a change in the purpose or level of activity, involving change in the application of code requirements. This may involve a change in the occupant load or occupancy classification (Example: a “Mercantile use” convenience store is converted into an “Assembly use” restaurant). A change of use permit is required for a change within an occupancy classification; the work may include the reconfiguration of space which does not affect any life safety provisions (Example: a “Business use” Bank is converted into a “Business use” office building). Many alterations include both a change of use and occupancy.

Work NOT requiring a Building Permit



- 1-story detached residential accessory structures used as tool or storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, with floor area of 200 sq. ft. or less
- 1-story detached commercial accessory structures with floor area less than 120 sq. ft.
- Walls retaining less than four feet.
- Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops, and similar finish work.
- Residential swings and other playground equipment

While the examples above outline some work that does not require a building permit, all structures require a Zoning Compliance Permit.

Contact

Building

Department

Building Commissioner
508-821-1015

[Department Website](#)

Planning and Conservation

Department

Director of Planning
508-821-1051

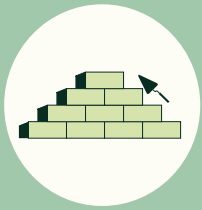
[Department Website](#)

Dept. of Public Works

508-821-1431

[Department Website](#)

Obtaining a Building Permit



How do I obtain a building permit?

Submit a completed building permit application and plans to the Building Department prior to construction. Elements such as foundation, plumbing, and electrical may be permitted separately under certain conditions. Periodic inspections must be scheduled as elements of the project are completed. After your work is completed and a final inspection and review, the project will receive a 'Certificate of Occupancy' from the Building Department, which is required to occupy the building.



Road Opening Permits

Homeowners or business owners looking to tie into existing sewer lines may need to pursue a road opening permit. Those looking to do so will need to apply for a permit through the Department of Public Works.

References

[City of Taunton Permit Application Forms](#)

[City of Taunton Online Building Permits](#)

[MA State Building Code](#)

Obtaining a Special Permit



What is a special permit?

A Special Permit is a permit that allows for a variety of uses and activities that are subject to a review process and special conditions established in the Zoning Ordinance. Special Permit applications are filed by property owners or developers who wish to develop particular uses such as apartment housing, certain new principal or accessory uses, a non-conforming situation, a Home Occupation, earth removal, or activity within a floodplain.

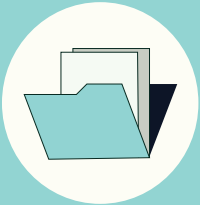
Obtaining a Special Permit

How do I file for a Special Permit?

Applying for a Special Permit is a two-step process:

1. Application

File the completed application, copies of the site plan, certified list of abutters, any other supporting information, and fee with the Planning and Conservation Department, who will review the application for completeness and accuracy. Next, the Planning and Conservation Department will file your materials with the Office of the City Clerk, which begins the statutory timeline.



2. Public Hearing

Upon the filing of your application, you will receive a date for your public hearing. This public hearing is your opportunity to present your application to the special permit granting authority in question (Zoning Board, Planning Board, or Municipal Council and any interested neighbors), as well as receive feedback on your proposal and answer any questions those present may have.

What is the timeframe for a decision?

The special permit granting authority must conduct the public hearing within 65 days of the filing date of the petition and must render a decision within 90 days from the close of the public hearing. The City of Taunton makes every effort to expedite the permitting process well ahead of these timelines.



Contact

Planning and Conservation Department

1st

Director of Planning
508-821-1051

[Department Website](#)

City Clerk

2nd

508-821-1024

[Department Website](#)

References

[Special Permit Application](#)

[Special Permit / Site Plan Review Fees](#)

Obtaining a Variance



What is a Variance?

A variance is a waiver of a zoning requirement, typically a dimensional standard such as lot area, lot frontage, building height, or property line setbacks. Variance applications are filed by property owners or developers whose proposed development does not satisfy certain dimensional and density standards of the Zoning Ordinance.

Obtaining a Variance



Who oversees the variance process?

The Zoning Board of Appeals reviews and acts on petitions for variances.

How do I get Started?

Application:

File the completed application, copies of the site plan, certified list of abutters, any other supporting information, and fee with the Planning and Conservation Department who will review the application for completeness and accuracy. Next, the Planning and Conservation Department will file your materials with the Office of the City Clerk, which begins the statutory timeline.

Public Hearing:

Upon the filing of your application, you will receive a date for your public hearing. This public hearing is your opportunity to present your application to the ZBA and any interested neighbors, as well as receive feedback on your proposal and answer any questions those present may have.

What is the timeframe for a decision?

The Zoning Board of Appeals must conduct the public hearing within 65 days and must render a decision within 90 days of the filing date. The City of Taunton makes every effort to expedite the permitting process well ahead of these timelines



Contact

Planning and Conservation Department

Director of Planning
508-821-1051

[Department Website](#)

1st

City Clerk

508-821-1024

[Department Website](#)

2nd

References

[Zoning Board of Appeals Application](#)

Site Plan Review



What is Site Plan Review?

Some development projects require site plan review and approval. The site plan review process serves to establish a dialogue with a developer. In doing so, it enhances the project's design and reduces adverse impacts on the immediate neighborhood and environment. The process strives to protect and promote the City's economic, environmental, and cultural resources.

A site plan is a detailed, professionally prepared plan, along with supporting documentation, of how you intend to design, construct, and develop a site. It is prepared by a licensed engineer / team and includes features, such as building footprints, parking, driveways and roads, topography, drainage systems, sewer and water features, lighting, landscaping, and signage.

Site Plan Review

What are the Site Plan Review Thresholds?

There are various thresholds that can trigger Site Plan review from the City of Taunton, including:

- Additions to commercial or industrial projects that increase impervious area, the minimum number of parking spaces, or traffic flow on site.
- A change of use in Taunton's Business, Highway Business, Office, or Industrial districts (including by right developments) that increases dimensional requirements, the amount of impervious area, or landscaping / parking requirements.
- Any changes to on-site parking, an increase in impervious area, multifamily (4+ units) residential projects, new non-residential projects on a vacant or unimproved site, traffic increases of 50+ cars, or the addition of new units to a multifamily residential project.



How do I get started?

1. Pre-application:

Prior to submitting an application, applicants must submit plans to the City Planner, who will offer guidance on which sections of the Site Plan Review Article are applicable to the application.

2. Application:

File the completed application, along with (20) copies (and a PDF copy) with the Department of Planning and Conservation. At this time, the City Planner will forward copies of your application to the appropriate City departments, who will review the materials to ensure that the data and methodology submitted in the application are complete. During this time, individual departments may provide recommendations to the DIRB regarding the plan's potential impacts.



Contact

Planning and Conservation Department

Director of Planning
508-821-1051

[Department Website](#)

City Clerk

508-821-1024

[Department Website](#)

Building Department

Building Commissioner
508-821-1015

[Department Website](#)

Site Plan Review

How do I get started? (Continued)

3. Site Plan Committee Review:

All relevant departments will submit findings from their review of the site plan to the SPRC and DIRB. During this time, the DIRB can specify conditions or remedial measures to address any expected impacts from the Site Plan application. The SPRC will also consider any additional information, submitted by any person, official or agency, or any information acquired by the SPRC on its own initiative or research.

4. Findings and Final Decisions:

Prior to any findings, the SPRC will review all reports from requested departments and boards and provide written information on the findings on a list of relevant topics, such as City health and fire codes, traffic, pedestrian safety, and sewer impacts. These topics serve as the basis for Approval or Disapproval. In addition to an outright decision, the Committee may approve an application with conditions, limitations, and safeguards.

Who oversees Site Plan Review?

The Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC), which is comprised of the Taunton Planning Board, has the vested power to review site plans. The Direct Impact Review Board (DIRB) may advise the SPRC as necessary.

What is the timeframe for a decision?

The Site Plan Review Committee must open a Public Hearing within 45 days of filing for any successfully completed application, and render a decision within 60 days of the date from which the Public Hearing is opened (or 90 days from the initial submittal of the Site Plan Review application). If individual departments do not submit feedback within the 90 days from the date the application is opened, that department is considered to find the application to have no adverse effects.



References

[**City of Taunton Site Plan Review and Special Permits Guide**](#)

[**Special Permit / Site Plan Review Fees**](#)

Stormwater Management



What is Stormwater Management?

The term "stormwater" refers to any water that originates from precipitation events such as rain, snow, or ice melt.

Because development alters the ability of soil to absorb water, which can then have adverse effects on public health, safety, and the environment, it is important to pursue stormwater management practices. Stormwater that does not soak into the ground (a process known as "infiltration") becomes runoff that flows along the surface of the land until it reaches streams, rivers, wetlands, or man-made drainage structures. Depending upon the timing and volume of the runoff, flooding problems can result. Runoff can also carry surface contaminants into bodies of water, resulting in local water pollution.

Stormwater Management

How is the Stormwater Management Process Reviewed in Taunton?



The Planning and Conservation Department reviews stormwater management for large projects under the **Site Plan Review** process, reviews of **Subdivisions**, and **Notice of Intent** under the Conservation Commission as the project pertains to wetlands. There is no standalone application for Stormwater Management.

Who oversees the stormwater management process?



The Conservation Commission is the reviewing authority in nearly every case. Stormwater Management is not a separate filing, and functions as a part of the broader project filing (for example, NOI, Site Plan Review, or Subdivision). Projects that do not trigger the thresholds for a stormwater review, and do not have **Wetland Protection** requirements do not need to apply for Stormwater Management review as part of their filing.

How do I get started?

The application package must be submitted as a part of the application for the broader review process under which the stormwater management plan falls (i.e. Site Plan Review).

Plan

Submitting a site plan is the mandatory filing for Stormwater Management review. This plan is used as part of the project's overall evaluation process, and indicates important information, such as drainage patterns, stormwater calculations, groundcover (including impermeable surfaces), slopes, and more.



Contact

Planning and Conservation Department

1st

Conservation Agent
508-821-1095

[Department Website](#)

Building Department

2nd

Building Commissioner
508-821-1015

[Department Website](#)

Dept. of Public Works

508-821-1431

[Department Website](#)

References

City of Taunton Zoning Code Article 3 §381-12 through §381-19

[City of Taunton Stormwater Management Resources](#)

Stormwater Management

How do I get started? (continued)



Application

File the completed application, and items required for the permit for which you are applying; for example, copies of the site plan, certified list of abutters, and fee, along with stormwater calculations, stormwater checklist, and any other supporting information with the Department of Planning and Conservation. You are encouraged to bring your application to allow staff to review its content for completeness and accuracy, prior to filing. Next, the application will go to the Office of the City Clerk, which starts the statutory timeline.

Public Hearing

As applicable to the permit for which you are applying, upon filing your application, you will be provided with a date for your public hearing. The public hearing is your opportunity to present your application to the Conservation Commission and any interested neighbors, as well as receive feedback on your proposal and answer any questions those present may have.



What is the timeframe for a decision?

The Conservation Commission must conduct the public hearing within 21 days and must render a decision within 21 days of the close of the hearing. The City of Taunton makes every effort to expedite the review process well ahead of these timelines.

Final Steps

Upon completion of construction and stabilization of the site, or within 45 days of the expiration date of the Order of Conditions, applicants are required to apply for a Certificate of Compliance. This gives the Commission the opportunity to determine that all of the work required for the permit has been satisfactorily completed in accordance with the approved plan.



Contact

Planning and Conservation Department

1st

Conservation Agent
508-821-1095

[Department Website](#)

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Dept. of Public Works

508-821-1431

[Department Website](#)

References

City of Taunton Zoning Code Article 3 §381-12 through §381-19

[City of Taunton Stormwater Management Resources](#)

Wetlands Protection



What are wetlands and why do we protect them?

A wetland is land that is saturated with water, either permanently or seasonally. Examples include meadows, marshes, swamps, bogs, and fens. The primary factor that distinguishes wetlands from other land forms is the characteristic vegetation that is adapted to its unique soil conditions. Wetlands consist primarily of hydric soil, which supports aquatic plants.

Wetlands, rivers, streams, lakes, brooks, ponds, reservoirs, and the underground aquifers in Taunton are all part of a natural system that provides water for use by residents. Wetlands provide habitat and food for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife and act as a conduit for the movement of water from one area to another. Wetlands also serve as temporary storage areas for water, filtering out pollution, providing containment for floodwaters and allowing the filtered water to recharge to the groundwater table.

Wetlands Protection



Who needs a wetlands permit?

A permit from the Conservation Commission is required for any potential activity or project that proposes to fill or alter any of the following:

- A wetland resource area.
- The two hundred (200') foot riverfront area.
- The one hundred (100') foot buffer zone associated with wetlands and other areas.
- The one hundred twenty five (100') foot buffer zone associated with a certified or a potential vernal pool.

The term "alter" includes, but is not limited to, any development, construction, destruction of vegetation, change in drainage characteristics or flow patterns, or change in the groundwater.

Who oversees wetlands permitting?

The Conservation Commission is responsible for administering both the City of Taunton Conservation Ordinance and Regulations and the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (WPA). The commission will review proposed projects based upon their proximity to a resource area and their design, in order to minimize any potential impacts.



Contact

Planning and Conservation Department

Conservation Agent
508-821-1095

[Department Website](#)

References

Removal Fill, Dredging, or Altering Land Bordering Water

Massachusetts General
Law Ch. 131, §40

[City of Taunton](#)

[Conservation Ordinance
Regulation Index](#)

Types of Wetlands Permits



ANRAD

Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD)

What is an ANRAD?

An ANRAD is a procedure to confirm the location of Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW) and other resources on a site. This process is often utilized prior to the preparation of detailed engineering plans to assist project planning.

How do I file an ANRAD?

File copies of your application, fee, site plan and certified list of abutters to the Planning and Conservation Department. Once submitted, the Conservation Agent will perform a site visit to confirm your proposed BVW line. You will also be provided with the date of your public hearing to discuss the application.

What is the timeframe for a decision?

A decision arrives within 21 days of the close of the public hearing. If approved, the Commission will issue an Order of Resource Area Delineation (ORAD). The ORAD, once approved, must be recorded at the Registry of Deeds and a copy of the recording information sent to the Planning and Conservation Department.

Request for determination of Applicability (RDA)

The Conservation Commission is responsible for administering both the City of Taunton Conservation Ordinance and Regulations and the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (WPA). Proposed projects are reviewed based upon the proximity to a resource area and their design to minimize potential impacts.

What is an RDA?

An RDA is a procedure to determine whether the work you are proposing will affect any adjacent wetland resources and allows the Commission to determine whether your proposed work is subject to the City of Taunton Conservation Ordinance or the WPA (and thus, requires further permitting).

Contact

Planning and Conservation Department

Conservation Agent
508-821-1095

[Department Website](#)

References

Removal Fill, Dredging, or Altering Land Bordering Water

Massachusetts General Law Ch. 131, §40

[City of Taunton Conservation Ordinance Regulation Index](#)

[NOI / ANRAD Notification to Abutters Form](#)



RDA

Types of Wetlands Permits

What is the timeframe for a decision?

A decision will be made within 21 days of the initial application filing. The Commission issues a Determination of Applicability (DOA) stating that the work is either: not subject to City of Taunton Conservation Ordinance and Regulations or the WPA and may proceed without further permitting (a negative determination), or that further permitting is required (a positive determination).

Notice of Intent (NOI)

What is an NOI?

An NOI is the procedure to allow proposed work within the 100-foot buffer zone, 200 feet of a river area, or within a wetland resource area itself.

How do I file an NOI?

File copies of your application, fee, site plan, stormwater management calculations and certified list of abutters. At this time you will be provided with the date of your public hearing to discuss the application.

What is the timeframe for a decision?

The NOI application, if compliant, will be approved during the meeting. If the proposed work is found to not incur significant, adverse impacts to a wetland resource area, the Commission will issue an Order of Conditions (OOC). The permit is valid for 3 years.

What are the final steps?

Once the work is completed, you must close out your permit by applying for a Certificate of Compliance (COC), which will allow the Commission to verify that all of the work was performed in compliance with the WPA. The process requires an application, a statement from the project's professional engineer and a site visit from the Conservation Agent.

Contact

Planning and Conservation Department

Conservation Agent
508-821-1095
[Department Website](#)

References

Removal Fill, Dredging, or Altering Land Bordering Water

Massachusetts General
Law Ch. 131, §40

City of Taunton Conservation Ordinance Regulation Index

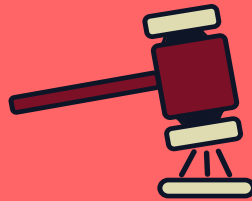
NOI / ANRAD Notification to Abutters Form

Information / Procedures for NOI Plan Submittal



NOI

Zoning Appeals



What is a zoning appeal?

An appeal is a challenge to any decision or ruling of the Building Commissioner relative to a zoning matter or the issuance of a building permit. Any person who believes themselves to be aggrieved by their inability to obtain a building permit; or to dispute an enforcement action, zoning determination, or issuance of a permit to a third party may make a zoning appeal.

Zoning Appeals



Who oversees the appeals process?

The Zoning Board of Appeals is the administrative authority that reviews appeal applications. The Board may either uphold or overturn the ruling of the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

How do I file an appeal?

There are two steps towards filing an appeal:

Application

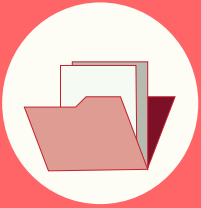
First, file the application form, fee, copies of the form, site plan, and certified list of abutters with the Planning and Conservation Department. At that time, the Department will file your completed application with the City Clerk, who will retain copies for review by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Public Hearing

Next, upon the filing of your application, you will be provided with a date for your public hearing. This public hearing is your opportunity to present your application to the ZBA and any interested neighbors, as well as answer any questions that those present may have.

What is the timeframe for a decision?

An appeal must be filed within 30 days of the decision or order by the Zoning Enforcement Officer. The Zoning Board of Appeals must conduct the public hearing within 65 days and must render a decision within 90 days of the applicant's filing date with the City Clerk. The City of Taunton makes every effort to expedite the permitting process well ahead of these timelines.



Contact

Planning and Conservation

1st

Department

Director of Planning
508-821-1051

[Department Website](#)

City Clerk

2nd

508-821-1024

[Department Website](#)

References

Zoning Appeals

Massachusetts General
Law Ch. 40A §17

Zoning Board of Appeals Application

Adopting and Amending Zoning Ordinances



What is a zoning amendment (AKA a Rezoning)?

A rezoning or zoning amendment is a change to the text of the Zoning Ordinance or the boundaries of a zoning district, as shown on the zoning map. For example, a property owner may propose a change to the zoning map to reflect changing land use conditions.

A rezoning application may be filed by the Municipal Council, Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board, an individual owning land to be affected by the amendment, ten registered voters of the City, regional planning agency (SRPEDD), or other methods provided by the Taunton Home Rule Charter.

Adopting and Amending Zoning Ordinances



Who oversees the rezoning process?

The Municipal Council is the administrative authority that reviews and acts on rezoning petitions. A joint public hearing is conducted with the Planning Board, who provides a recommendation to the Municipal Council prior to their final vote.

How do I get started?

Application

File the completed application, copies of the site plan, certified list of abutters, metes and bounds description (where applicable), any supporting information, and fee with the Planning and Conservation Department. You are encouraged to bring your application to allow staff to review its content for completeness and accuracy. Next, the Planning and Conservation Department will file your materials with the Office of the City Clerk, which begins the statutory timeline.

Public Hearing

Upon the filing of your application, you will receive a date for your public hearing. The Municipal Council and the Planning Board will each hold a meeting alongside interested neighbors in order to receive feedback on your proposal and answer any questions those present may have.

What is the timeframe for a decision?

The public hearing must be held within 65 days of the application filing date. The Municipal Council must render a decision within 90 days of the close of the hearing. The City of Taunton makes every effort to expedite the permitting process well ahead of these timelines. The Planning Board submits a written recommendation to the Municipal Council, who then takes the final vote. If approved, the zoning ordinance or zoning amendment becomes effective from the date of the Council vote.



Contact

Planning and Conservation Department

Department

Director of Planning
508-821-1051

[Department Website](#)

City Clerk

508-821-1024

[Department Website](#)

References

Adoption or change of zoning ordinances or by-laws

Massachusetts General Law Ch. 40A §5

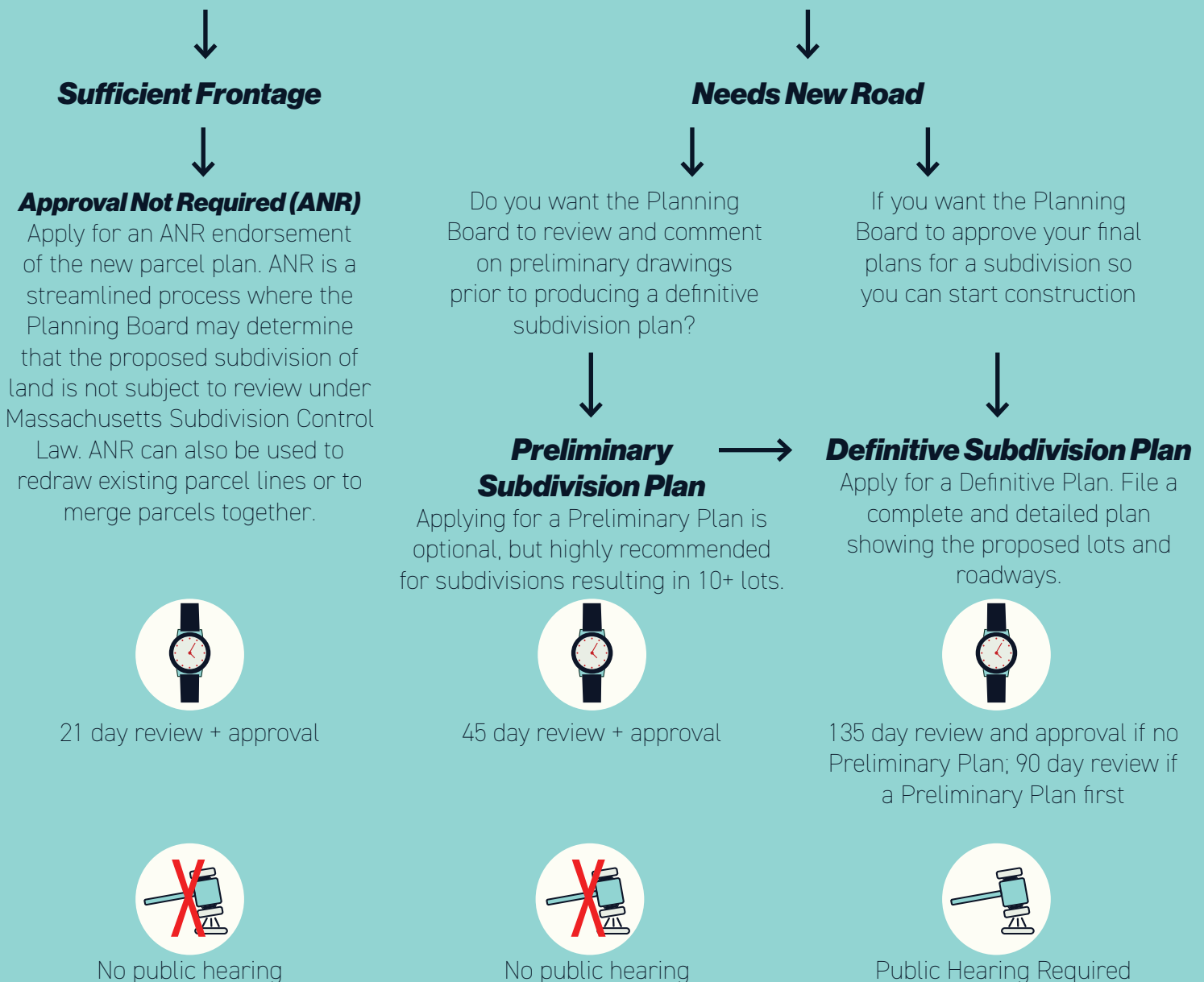
Subdivisions

What is a subdivision?

A subdivision is, generally, the division of land into two or more building lots. The Planning Board reviews and approves applications for subdivisions. In its review, the Planning Board takes into consideration the Subdivision Control Law, the local Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land, and the Zoning Ordinance.

Which process should I follow to subdivide my property?

Does each proposed new parcel have the required frontage under zoning on an existing street; is it a new road; are road improvements required to subdivide the parcel into buildable lots; or is it located near wetlands?



Subdivision (ANR Plans)



What is an Approval Not Required (ANR or Form A) Plan?

An ANR or Form A plan is a subdivision of land that creates a lot (or lots) that has the required frontage under zoning on an existing way. This process allows the division of land without requiring review under the state Subdivision Control Law.

Who can file an Approval Not Required (ANR or Form A) application?

Any land owner who wishes to subdivide or change property lines to create new lots, all of which meet the applicable zoning requirements for frontage on an existing approved way, may submit such a plan for endorsement by the Board.

Who oversees the Approval Not Required (ANR or Form A) process?

The Planning Board is the administrative authority that reviews and endorses ANR plans.

How do I apply for an Approval Not Required (ANR) determination?

Application:

First, file the completed application, fee, and copies of the site plan with the Planning and Conservation Department. You are encouraged to bring your application to allow staff to review its content for accuracy and completeness. Next, the Planning and Conservation Department will file your application materials with the Office of the City Clerk, which starts the statutory timeline.

Application Review:

Upon the filing of your application, the planning Board will conduct a review.

What is the timeframe for decision?

The Planning Board has 21 days from the date you file your application to make a decision. The City of Taunton makes every effort to expedite the permitting process well ahead of these timelines.

Contact

Planning and Conservation Department

Director of Planning
508-821-1051
[Department Website](#)

1st

City Clerk

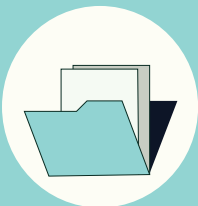
508-821-1024
[Department Website](#)

2nd

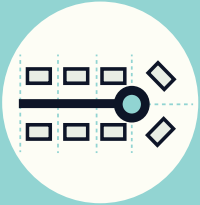
References

Approval of plans not subject to control law; procedure
Massachusetts General Law Ch. 41 §81P

[City of Taunton Subdivision Rules and Regulations](#)



Subdivision *(Preliminary Plans)*



What is a Preliminary Subdivision Plan?

A Preliminary Plan is an optional process during which an applicant may submit a plan of a proposed subdivision to the Planning Board for review, guidance, and recommendations. This process strives to resolve questions and address necessary changes before proceeding to a definitive plan.

Who can file for Preliminary Subdivision approval?

Anyone may submit a preliminary subdivision plan prior to submitting a definitive plan of a subdivision. Applicants may submit a preliminary application for subdivisions; however, it is required for cluster or inclusionary developments.

How do I apply for a Preliminary Subdivision Plan?

Application:

First, file the completed application and fee, stormwater management checklist and calculations, and copies of the site plan with the Planning and Conservation Department. You are encouraged to bring your application to allow the staff to review its content for completeness and accuracy. Next, the Planning and Conservation Department will file your application materials with the Office of the City Clerk, which starts the statutory timeline.

2. Public Meeting:

Upon the filing of your application, you will be provided with a date for your public meeting. This is your opportunity to present your application to the Planning Board and any interested neighbors, as well as receive feedback on your proposal and answer any questions that those present may have.

What is the timeframe for decision?

The Planning Board must render a decision within 45 days of the filing of the application with the Office of the City Clerk. The City of Taunton makes every effort to expedite the permitting process well ahead of these timelines.



Contact

Planning and Conservation Department

Director of Planning
508-821-1051

[Department Website](#)

1st

City Clerk

508-821-1024

[Department Website](#)

2nd

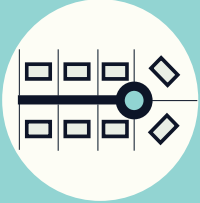
References

Approval of plans not subject to control law; procedure

Massachusetts General Law Ch. 41 §81P

City of Taunton Subdivision Rules and Regulations

Subdivision *(Definitive Plans)*



What is a Definitive Subdivision Plan?

A Definitive Subdivision Plan shows a complete and detailed plan of a subdivision of land and roadways.

Who can file for Definitive Subdivision Approval?

Any person or developer wishing to subdivide land to create multiple buildable lots having frontage on a new roadway may file a definitive subdivision plan application.

How do I apply for a Definitive Subdivision Plan

Application:

File the completed application, fee, stormwater management checklist and calculations, certified list of abutters, and copies of the site plan with the Planning and Conservation Department. You are encouraged to bring your application to allow staff to review its content for completeness and accuracy. Next, bring the same application materials to the Office of the City Clerk, which starts the statutory timeline.

2. Public Meeting:

Upon the filing of your application, you will be provided with a date for your public hearing. This public hearing is your opportunity to present your application to the Planning Board and any interested neighbors, as well as receive feedback on your proposal and answer any questions that those present may have.

What is the timeframe for decision?

The Planning Board must render a decision within 135 days of the filing of the application with the City Clerk's Office. If the applicant submits the definitive plan within 7 months of the date on which the preliminary plan was submitted, the Planning Board must act on the plan within 90 days. The City of Taunton makes every effort to expedite the permitting process well ahead of these timelines.



Contact

Planning and Conservation Department

Director of Planning
508-821-1051

[Department Website](#)

References

Approval of plans not subject to control law; procedure

Massachusetts General Law Ch. 41 §81P

City of Taunton Subdivision Rules and Regulations

Departments and Permits

Agency	Role / Responsibility	How We can Help You	Contact
Assessor's Office	The Assessor's Office establishes the value of all real estate and personal property for the purposes of taxation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified abutters lists • Property valuation 	Chair, Board of Assessors 774-406-4690 Website
Planning Board	The Taunton Planning Board is a 7-member board elected every two years. The Board administers the subdivision control rules and regulations of the City of Taunton enacted in accordance with MGL Ch 41 sections 81A-81J. The Board is also required to comply with the regulations established in MGL Ch40A and the City of Taunton Zoning Ordinance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANR plans • Preliminary and Definitive subdivisions • Special Permits • Zoning Amendments • Site Plan Review 	Director (508) 821-1051 Website
Conservation Commission	The Conservation Commission protects the wetlands, water resources, and adjoining land areas in the City of Taunton by controlling activities deemed by the Taunton Conservation Commission likely to have a significant or cumulative effect upon these resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineations • Requests for Determination of Applicability • Local Wetland Permits • Notices of Intent 	Conservation Agent 508-821-1095 Website

Departments and Permits

Agency	Role / Responsibility	How We can Help You	Contact
Police Department	The Taunton Police Department shall strive for excellence in performance and delivery of services to the total community. They will recruit, employ, and maintain personnel who reflect high professional standards in a progressive and flexible manner that will meet tomorrow's community needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firearms • Soliciting • Auctioneering 	Business Line 508-824-7522 <u>Website</u>
Board of Health	The City of Taunton Board of Health seeks to protect public health, safety, and the environment within its jurisdiction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title V septic system permits & inspections • Food Establishment Permits • Body Art Permits • Well Permits 	Director 508-821-1400 <u>Website</u>
Building Department	The Building Department's inspectional division enforces the provisions of Massachusetts State Building Code and the City of Taunton Zoning Ordinance in order to protect the health, safety and general welfare of residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Trade Permits • Certificates of Inspection • Zoning Enforcement • Architectural Access 	Building Commissioner 508-821-1015 <u>Website</u>

Departments and Permits

Agency	Role / Responsibility	How We can Help You	Contact
Department of Public Works	The Department of Public Works coordinates the construction and repair of all City streets, the water and sewer system, and the repair of all public vehicles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Opening Permits • Sewer and Water Permits • Boring and Test Pits 	Commissioner 508-821-1431 <u>Website</u>
License Commission	Consisting of three civilians (a Chairman and two Commissioners) and two detectives to assist, the License Commission grants licenses and enforces rules, regulations, local ordinances, and state laws pertaining to licenses under their jurisdiction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol and common victualler permits • Entertainment, amusement devices 	Legal Assistant 508-821-1037 <u>Website</u>
Office of the City Clerk	The Office of the City Clerk conducts filing, maintenance, disposition, and preservation of City records and materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Certificates • Filings for Planning Board, and Zoning Board • Applications for class I, II, III, and IV auto licenses • Yard sale permit, second hand vending and salvage • Antique dealer, old gold, billiard table flammable storage, fortune teller, junk collector, junk dealer carnival, transient vendor, temporary fixed vendor, livery pawn broker, and dog licenses petitioned through Clerk, then filed through Municipal Council.* 	City Clerk 508-821-1024 <u>Website</u> <i>*Licenses through Municipal Council issued for 1 year</i>

Departments and Permits

Agency	Role / Responsibility	How We can Help You	Contact
Zoning Board of Appeals	The Taunton Zoning Board of Appeals is a 5-member board, elected in a City wide election every two years. The purpose of the Zoning Board of Appeals is to hear cases for Variances, Special Permits, and Comprehensive Permits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Permits (flood plain district, non-conforming situations) • Variances (from area, setbacks, lot frontage and width) • Administrative Appeals 	<p>Planning Director (508) 821-1051 <u>Website</u></p>
Planning and Conservation Department	The Planning and Conservation Department is the contact point for the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, Site Plan Review, General Zoning Administration, and the ADA Coordinator. The Mission of the Department is to provide a coordinated, accurate and effective review of the various types of applications in a timely manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use planning guidance • Environmental permitting • Technical and administrative support (see Conservation Commission, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals) • Zoning Determinations 	<p>Director of Planning 508-821-1051 <u>Website</u></p>
Fire Department	The mission of the Taunton Fire Department is to provide quality comprehensive fire protection for homeowners, businesses, and government property throughout the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire prevention inspections • Installation & monitoring of municipal fire alarm system • Blasting permits • Outdoor fuel storage permits • Hazardous materials storage and processing permits 	<p>Fire Prevention Officer 508-821-1453 <u>Website</u></p>