



DEVELOPMENT GUIDE FOR COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to provide a general overview of the development review process utilized in the City of Wadsworth for commercial, industrial and multifamily projects from the initial contact with the City Planning Department to the issuance of occupancy permits. This guide breaks the review process down into logical steps and provides basic information on project review requirements for each of these steps.

Who should use this guide?

This guide was prepared to assist business owners, land owners and design professionals who are seeking information regarding potential commercial, industrial or multifamily development projects that involve one or more of the following:

- New site development
- Addition/expansion to existing structures and facilities (including expansion of on-site parking)
- Most use changes within existing buildings

What this guide does not provide

This guide was not intended to provide fully summarize the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations or other development regulations administered by the City of Wadsworth. The City's ordinances are available online at <http://www.wadsworthcity.com>.

This guide was also not intended to provide full information regarding development regulations administered by other agencies (i.e., Medina County Building Department, Health Department, Soil Conservation Services, Ohio EPA, etc.). For further information, please contact these agencies directly. Phone numbers and web addresses for these agencies are located in the appendix to this guide.

Time Frame for Project Review

The site development process is highly individualized, which makes its difficult to estimate how long the review process will last. Additions to existing structures will normally have a quicker review time than new construction projects. However, not all sites are the same and the existence of easements, underground coal mines, storage tanks, topography, soils and other on- and off-site constraints may make some sites more difficult to develop than others that are similarly zoned. Generally speaking, most projects should anticipate the following time schedule:

Planning Commission Review (from initial contact through Commission approval):	2-4 weeks*
Engineering Plan Review:	2-3 weeks**
Building Plan Review (Medina County Building Department):	3-6 weeks**

*Add two additional weeks if a public hearing is required.

**The Engineering and Building Plan reviews can take place simultaneously. This helps to reduce the length of the review process, since there is no need to receive Engineering Department approval prior to submitting building plans for review to the Medina County Building Department. However, all aspects of the City of Wadsworth's review process, including engineering site plan approval, payment of all fees, issuance of a zoning certificate and a site development permit, etc., must be complete in order for the Medina County Building Department to issue a building permit.



COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

Review Process Outline

The review process for commercial, industrial and multifamily projects follows these basic steps:

1. Initial Contact with Planning Department
2. Preliminary Discussion Meeting
3. Planning Commission Review
4. Engineering Site Plan Review
5. Permit Procedures
6. Project Construction
7. Obtain Occupancy Certificates

The remainder of this guide provides brief summaries for each of the steps noted above. Special requirements for use changes are also provided.



STEP 1: INITIAL CONTACT WITH PLANNING DEPARTMENT

This is an opportunity to discuss a proposed project to the City Planning Department and gather information on zoning requirements and the plan review process. This would also be an ideal time to gather site utility information from the Engineering Department. Based on the scale of the project, the City may request that a preliminary discussion be held prior to formal submittal to the Planning Commission.

Checklist

- ☐ Check planning/zoning information for the proposed project and site with the Planning Department or online at <http://www.wadsworthcity.com/citymap.htm>
- ☐ Check availability of public utilities to the site and/or potential site constraints with Engineering Department and other utility providers.
- ☐ Determine if proposed use is permitted, conditionally permitted or prohibited in the zoning district in which property is located.
- ☐ Receive Planning Commission meeting/deadline schedule.
- ☐ Discuss need for preliminary discussion meeting with Planning Director (See Step 2 below)



STEP 2: PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION MEETING

The purpose of the preliminary discussion is to review plan submittal requirements with other city agencies that are involved in the site plan review process. This provides an opportunity for city administration to point out areas of concern and determine the need for zoning variances so that the plans can be revised before formal submittal for Planning Commission Review. The goal of this review is to minimize the amount of time that a project must be on the Planning Commission's agenda by addressing potential concerns before the project is presented to the Planning Commission for a formal review. In most cases, the PLANNING DEPARTMENT ENCOURAGES A PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION PRIOR TO FULL PLAN SUBMITTAL.

Checklist

- ❑ Applicant submits 10 sets of preliminary site plans, building elevations and floor plans to the Planning Department. Chapter 154.070 of the zoning code discusses site plan requirements. The City's codified ordinances are available online at <http://www.wadsworthcity.com/>.
- ❑ Planning Director schedules a preliminary discussion meeting with city agencies involved in the site plan review process (typically within three days of receipt of discussion plan).
- ❑ City agencies review plans and comment upon specific elements of the plan (e.g., compliance with the comprehensive plan, zoning and subdivision regulations; site utility and engineering issues; health and public safety issues; etc.).
- ❑ Determine the need for any zoning variances and the procedure for applying for a zoning variance.
- ❑ Determine need for a traffic impact analysis and establish the parameters for such study, if necessary.
- ❑ Determine need for a sewage pretreatment questionnaire.
- ❑ Applicant should revise site plans to address issues and concerns raised by reviewing agencies prior to formal submittal to the Planning Commission.



STEP 3: PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW

As noted in the Wadsworth City Zoning Ordinance, all commercial, industrial, and conditional uses must be reviewed and approved by the City Planning Commission before construction commences. This applies to new site construction, additions to existing facilities, accessory structure and possibly to some use changes (regardless of whether or not they involve site improvements, additions or modifications).

After revising the project plans to address issues and concerns raised in the preliminary review, a formal submittal to the Planning Commission is in order. The goal of this step is to obtain Planning Commission's "conceptual" plan approval subject to engineering site plan and building plan approvals from other agencies (i.e., Engineering Department, Fire Department, County Building Department, Ohio EPA, etc.).

Remember that the Planning Commission's approval does **not** constitute permission to obtain permits or start construction. Their approval signifies that a project is in compliance with the City's planning and zoning requirements. The City's Engineering Department must still review and approve infrastructure plans and building plans must be approved by the County Building Department before permits can be issued.

Checklist

- ☐ Applicant submits 15 sets of site plans, building elevation, floor plans and other required application materials (i.e., conditional zoning application, fee, traffic impact study, etc.).
- ☐ The site plan review will be held at the next scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission.
- ☐ Conditional uses require a **public hearing** by the Planning Commission.
- ☐ The Commission may table action on a project if it determines that additional information is required in order to ensure compliance with the zoning code.
- ☐ As provided by the zoning ordinance, the Planning Commission's may impose specific conditions upon site plan approval, to ensure project compliance with applicable development regulations (e.g., city's comprehensive plan and zoning code, stormwater management regulations, building and fire codes, etc.).

STEP 4: ENGINEERING SITE PLAN REVIEW

After Planning Commission has approved a project, the review process diverges into two separate paths: engineering site plan review and building plan review. To minimize delays in the overall project review process, building plans may be submitted to the Medina County Building Department so that they may begin their review of the building plans. However, please note that while the engineering site plan and building plan reviews can occur simultaneously, no zoning certificate or site development permit will be released by the City of Wadsworth until engineering plans are approved by the City's Engineering Department.

The City Engineering Department is the lead agency for the engineering site plan review. There are several purposes for the engineering plan review, the most important of which are:

- to ensure that site improvements and new infrastructure comply with city standards and regulations
- to ensure the compliance with stormwater management regulations (available online at <http://www.wadsworthcity.com/depart/engin.html>)
- to allow for adequate future growth by ensuring that public facilities and infrastructure are properly extended
- to minimize adverse impacts of site development on surrounding properties and public infrastructure
- to ensure that all special conditions of approval required by the Planning Commission have been addressed
- to ensure that all required approvals from other agencies and regulatory agencies have been obtained (e.g., Ohio EPA, Army Corps of Engineers, Soil Conservation Services, etc.).

The engineering plan review will most likely be the lengthiest step in the entire review process.

Checklist

- ☐ Contact Engineering Department to discuss engineering plan submission requirements.
- ☐ Submit *two* complete sets of detailed site engineering plans to the Engineering Department for review.
- ☐ Submit engineered plans to other regulatory agencies for review and approval as necessary (e.g., Ohio EPA for waterline and sanitary sewer plans; Army Corps of Engineers for wetlands permits, etc.).
- ☐ Simultaneously, submit building plans to the Medina County Building Department for review.
- ☐ The City Engineering Department shall review plans and submit a list of plan review comments and concerns to the applicant.
- ☐ Applicant revises engineering plans to address issues raised by the Engineering Department and submits revisions to the Engineering Department for review.
- ☐ The Engineering Department shall review the revisions and inform the applicant of whether the revised plans adequately address the initial comments and concerns. Further plan revisions may be required if some concerns or issues are not adequately addressed.
- ☐ Complete a sanitary sewer pre-treatment questionnaire, if required. Submit original to the Wastewater Plant Superintendent and submit copies to the Engineering and Planning Departments.
- ☐ Obtain necessary approvals from other regulatory agencies and provide evidence of such to the Engineering Department.
- ☐ Applicant submits revised engineering plans to Engineering Department for signature by the City Engineer and Zoning Inspector. Please submit a minimum of six complete sets for the City's records plus additional copies for the applicant's and contractor's records.
- ☐ Approved and signed engineering plans will be released upon City's receipt of evidence that all other agency approvals have been obtained and/or all public and private easements have been recorded.



STEP 5: PERMITS – ZONING & BUILDING

The final step before starting construction is to obtain necessary permits and pay the required fees to the proper agencies. As noted earlier in the guide, the Medina County Building Department is the agency that will review and approve building plans for commercial, industrial and multifamily projects. However, there are development fees that must be paid to the City before the Medina County Building Department will release building permits.

Once engineering site plan approval has been obtained, the applicant should apply to the City Building & Planning Department for a Zoning Certificate and a Site Development Permit. Prior to obtaining these documents, all fees that are due to the City (e.g., development, zoning, sanitary sewer capacity charges, deferred assessments, etc.) must be paid. These fees will be calculated after an application has been submitted. In addition, applicants must apply to the City Utility Department for temporary electric and water tap-in capacity permits.

Upon receipt of a Zoning Certificate and a Site Development, the applicant may obtain a Building Permit from the Medina County Building Department. Applicants should provide the Medina County Building Department with copies of the City's permits as evidence that all City fees have been paid.

Checklist

- ☐ Submit building plans and plan review application (in triplicate) to the Medina County Building Department. The County Building Department notes that the minimum plan review time is three (3) weeks. The County will not issue any building permit until applicant provides evidence that a zoning certificate has been issued by the City. For more information, please see the Medina County Building Department's *Guide for Commercial Developers* or contact the County Building Department at 330-722-9223
- ☐ Obtain application from the City Building & Planning Department for a Zoning Certificate and Site Development Permit. Pay fees and obtain development & zoning permits.
- ☐ Obtain application from the City Utility Billing Office for temporary electric and waterline tap-in capacity charges. Pay fees and obtain necessary permits.
- ☐ Contact City Electric Department regarding permanent electric service hookup and associated fees.
- ☐ Obtain a building permit from Medina County Building Department. A schedule of the County's fees may be obtained from the County Building Department. The County Building Department will require evidence that a zoning certificate has been issued before a building permit will be released.
- ☐ The County Building Department will require a copy of the City's Zoning Certificate as evidence that project has received zoning approval from the City prior to issuing a building permit.
- ☐ Submit a copy of the County's Building Permit to the City Building & Planning Department. This can be done via FAX, through the mail or in person.
- ☐ HVAC & electric permits must also be obtained through the Medina County Building Department. HVAC and electrical contractors must be registered with the Medina County Building Department. Please contact the County Building Department at 330-722-9223 for more information.
- ☐ Electrical contractors performing commercial/industrial work in Wadsworth must be also register with the City. For more information on the City's registration requirements, please contact the Service Director's Office (330-335-2708) or the Building and Planning Department (330-335-2753). HVAC contractors performing commercial work in the City do **NOT** need to be registered by the City.



STEP 6: PROJECT CONSTRUCTION

Once all fees have been paid and all approvals and permits received, site development and building construction can begin. The City will inspect all site improvements and infrastructure outside of the building (i.e., sanitary sewer, waterline, stormwater detention, etc.), while the County Building Department will oversee all building inspections (including HVAC and electric). The Medina County Health Department will issue permits and perform inspections for plumbing.

Checklist

- ☐ The City recommends that the applicant schedule a pre-construction meeting with Engineering Department to coordinate infrastructure construction and required inspections. Schedule inspections with the City Engineering Department for all site-related items (i.e., storm water detention/management systems, grading, water & sanitary sewer tie-ins, etc.).
- ☐ Install erosion control measures, as approved by the Soil Conservation Service, prior to site grading. Erosion control measures must be maintained during the construction process.
- ☐ Schedule all building inspections (structural, electrical and HVAC) with the County Building Department.
- ☐ Schedule all plumbing inspections with the Medina County Health Department.
- ☐ Coordinate additional inspections required by other regulatory agencies directly with those agencies as needed (e.g., Ohio EPA, Soil Conservation Services, etc.).



STEP 7: OBTAIN OCCUPANCY CERTIFICATES

Before any new structure or addition can be legally occupied, **two** Occupancy Certificates must be obtained. The first certificate is issued by the Medina County Building Department and certifies that the structure complies with all building, fire and health code requirements. The second certificate is issued by the City of Wadsworth and certifies that:

- all new structures comply with applicable building, fire, health and safety codes (as evidenced by receipt of a Medina County Occupancy Certificate)
- all conditions of site plan approval required by the City Planning Commission have been met, and
- all site improvements have been constructed or have been financially guaranteed.

Checklist

- ☐ Contact the City Building & Planning Department in advance of when an occupancy certificate is desired. Site inspection by City personnel is required to verify the completion of all site improvements and compliance with all Planning Commission conditions of approval. Unfinished site work may sometimes be financially guaranteed, if these site improvements cannot be completed before occupancy is desired.
- ☐ Provide financial guarantees to the City for all unfinished site work if necessary.
- ☐ All easements and maintenance agreements required by the project must be recorded at the County Recorder's Office. Copies of these recorded documents must be provided to the Planning and Engineering Departments prior to issuance of a City Occupancy Certificate.
- ☐ Verify that all building inspections have been completed and that the structure complies with building and fire code requirements.
- ☐ Obtain a Final Inspection Notice from the City of Wadsworth Fire Department.
- ☐ Obtain a Certificate of Occupancy from Medina County Building Department.
- ☐ Submit as-built drawings on mylar and stormwater detention volume verification to the City Engineering Department.
- ☐ Submit copies of the Medina County Occupancy Certificate and Wadsworth Fire Department's Final Inspection Notice to the City Building and Planning Department.
- ☐ Submit copy of completed Pre-Treatment Questionnaire to the Wastewater Superintendent (for all industrial uses). Use the following link address for a copy of the pre-treatment questionnaire: http://www.wadsworthcity.com/images/1/PreTreatment_Questionnaire.pdf.
- ☐ No new building or addition may be legally occupied until the City of Wadsworth has issued a Certificate of Occupancy.



COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL USE CHANGES

A use change occurs whenever a new commercial or industrial business opens in an existing structure that is properly zoned for the proposed use. A use change needs to be evaluated for both zoning compliance and building/fire code compliance.

Zoning compliance is evaluated by the City's Building & Planning Department, while building & fire code compliance will need to be determined by both the City Fire Department and the Medina County Building Department.

USE CHANGE REVIEW PROCEDURE

1. Determination of Zoning Compliance.

Applicants should submit a cover letter and site plan describing the proposed new use and any site modifications that are required for the new use. The Planning Director will review the proposal and determine whether the proposal requires approval of the City Planning Commission. If Planning Commission review is not required, the applicant will be notified and will then be able to obtain a zoning certificate for the use change. If Planning Commission review is required, a zoning certificate cannot be issued until after the Commission approves the new use.

City Planning Commission review is typically **not** required when the proposed use is similar to the previous use (for instance, opening a new restaurant or food service operation in a location previously occupied by a restaurant) and no site modifications are proposed (e.g. no building addition, parking lot expansion, etc.).

Use changes where the proposed use is dissimilar to the former use (for instance, opening a retail shop at the site of a former restaurant) **may** require approval by the City Planning Commission. Each case will be evaluated by the Planning Director.

2. Determination of Building & Fire Code Compliance.

Even though a new use is found to be in compliance with the City's zoning ordinance, each new use must demonstrate compliance with the building and fire codes applicable to the proposed use.

Applicants should contact the Medina County Building Department to determine whether or not a special inspection/use change inspection is required. Applicants should also contact the City Fire Department to set up a fire safety inspection as well.

If the inspections indicate that building modifications are necessary to bring the property in compliance with building and fire codes applicable to the proposed use, the modifications will need to be completed, inspected and approved before the County Building Department will issue a certificate of occupancy for the use change.

3. Certificates of Occupancy

Two Occupancy Certificates must be obtained for use changes. The first certificate is issued by the Medina County Building Department and certifies that the structure complies with all building, fire and health code requirements. The second certificate is issued by the City of Wadsworth and certifies that the structure and use comply with building, fire, health code and city zoning requirements.



APPENDIX AGENCY ADDRESSES & PHONE NUMBERS

Below are the names and phone numbers of City Departments and other reviewing agencies that may be involved in the site development process.

City Departments

Building & Planning	120 Maple Street	330-335-2753
Engineering	120 Maple Street	330-335-2751
Utility Service/Billing	120 Maple Street	330-335-2713
Electric	365 Broad Street	330-335-2831
Communications	365 Broad Street	330-335-2888

Additional information may be obtained online at <http://www.wadsworthcity.com/depart.htm>

Medina County Agencies

Web Site/Main Switchboard	http://www.co.medina.oh.us/county.htm	330-336-6657
Building Department	791 West Smith Road Medina, Ohio 44256 http://www.co.medina.oh.us/bldgdept/bldghome.htm	330-722-9223
Health Department	4800 Ledgewood Drive Medina, Ohio 44258	(330) 723-9523 or 888-723-9688
Tax Map Office	144 North Broadway Medina, Ohio 44256	330-725-9777
Auditor's Office	144 North Broadway #301 Medina, Ohio 44256 http://www.medinacountyauditor.org/	330-725-9767
Recorder's Office	144 North Broadway #303 Medina, Ohio 44256 http://www.recorder.co.medina.oh.us/	330-725-9782

Other Agencies

Soil Conservation Services	803 East Washington St. #160 Medina, Ohio 44256	330-722-2603
Ohio EPA – Northeast District	2110 East Aurora Road Twinsburg, Ohio 44087	330-425-9171
US Army Corps of Engineers	502 Eight Street Huntington, WV 25701	304-529-5655



INSPECTIONS – WHO TO CONTACT

Building & Electrical	Medina County Building Department	330-722-9220
Plumbing	Medina County Health Department	330-723-9523
Temporary Electric	City of Wadsworth Electric Dept.	330-335-2838
Site Improvements	City of Wadsworth Engineering Dept.	330-335-2751