CITY OF ROCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

THINK **ROCHESTER** – Economic Development

Business & Development Handbook

CITY OF ROCHESTER NEW HAMPSHIRE

Business & Development Handbook

© 2011 Economic Development Office
City of Rochester, NH
150 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH 03867
Phone (603) 335-7522 • Fax (603) 335-7597

Updated January 2012

Note:

This handbook is designed to be a general introduction to the development process in Rochester. In every case, the Department of Planning and Development should be consulted prior to any development actions that may be taken. This document should not be used for any purpose except as a reference manual. As such, persons using this document should not consider it to be a legal or binding covenant upon the City of Rochester.
Your feedback is welcome. Please do not hesitate to provide questions, comments or suggestions. Your comments help us improve this book as well as the development process. Contact Information: info@thinkrochester.biz

The mission of the REDC is to:

…Develop Rochester's potential as a business destination and hub of regional development activity.

…Provide for the continued availability of marketable industrial and commercial sites within Rochester, including capital improvements, municipal programs and other actions in order to strengthen the City's fiscal diversity and stabilize its tax base through sustainable growth and business retention.

The top five Priorities of the REDC (based on the Economic Development Strategic Plan and approved by City Council) are:

1. Granite Ridge Development District

- Implement the Route 11 Corridor Plan
- Frontage Road to maximize development potential
- Assess Tax Increment Financing for infrastructure improvements
- Market Rochester as a destination and Regional Center for office, hospitality and commercial activity

2. Granite State Business Park

- Acquire & expand business park
- Market to target industries and site selection professionals
- Leverage land assets to attract new users and facilitate expansions
- Maximize new employment and tax base
- Phase II infrastructure

3. Downtown Revitalization

- Support & Collaborate with the Rochester Main Street Program & the Rochester Opera House
- Invest in public infrastructure
- Expand target list for attraction efforts
- Online real estate vacancy list

4. Reposition Underperforming Properties

- Wallace Street Redevelopment Project
- Main Street Marketplace (Hoffman's)
- Utilize Available Tools (like RSA 79E)
- Strategize for chronic vacancies

5. Economic Gardening

- "Grow" new opportunities & support expansions
- Become a regional incubation center
- Consider entrepreneur and start-up opportunities
- Increase available training & resources

City of Rochester, New Hampshire
Economic Development Department
P 603-335-7522
info@thinkrochester.biz

Table of Contents

Introduction 5
Site Plan and Subdivision Applications 7
Activity Subject to Review 7
What type and level of review is necessary for my project? 7
Planning Application Procedure 8
Post-Approval 10
Approval & Inspection Packet 11
Other Planning Activities 12
Minor Site Applications 12
Special Downtown Applications 12
Home Occupations 14
Zoning Determination 15
Zoning Amendments 15
General Consultation 15
What fees are involved? 15
Schedules of Various Boards 16
What requires a Building Permit? 16
What can I do without getting a Building Permit? 17
What are the costs involved with Building Permits? 19
Where do I get a building permit application form? 19
Historic District 20
Sign Permit Process 23
City Code Chapters 25
New Hampshire Building Codes 26
New Hampshire Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) 27
Starting a new business? 29
Appendix 32

Introduction

Overview - The Economic Development Department

The Economic Development Department focuses their efforts on the promotion of new businesses, the relocation of businesses to Rochester, and the retention and expansion of existing businesses within the City of Rochester. Our expert staff is ready to assist you in these areas.

The Rochester Economic Development Office is here to assist you with your business needs. If you want to start a new business, we can meet with you to discuss your plans. Starting a business off on the right foot is an important step to achieving your dreams. Planning and organizing your strategy is the first of many steps to making the dream a reality. Our website www.thinkrochester.biz offers many resources including how to write a business plan, information about required permits and code requirements, financial resources, finding a location, and state information about registering your business, dealing with employees, and business taxes.

If you want to relocate your existing business to Rochester, we can assist you with finding a suitable location, the permit process with the city, and other valuable information to insure a smooth transition. Once you have selected a location, you will need to begin the permitting process which starts with a Letter of Intent. This enables the city staff to analyze your needs for permits and approvals. Our office can assist you through the process beginning with your Letter of Intent and then through whatever reviews and approvals you may need.

If you are an existing business in the City of Rochester, you may have needs for training your employees. Our office can provide resources and scholarships. There are a variety of financial assistance vehicles that may also be available for your business. We are here to help insure your success and growth. As your business grows, you may want to expand within the City, which requires going through the planning process with the city. We can assist you through that process.

We are happy to meet with you to discuss your needs and provide resources to help insure your success. Call (603) 335-7522 to make an appointment.

Overview - Department of Planning & Community Development

The Department of Planning and Development is responsible for coordinating the physical development and redevelopment of Rochester. This Department administers the Community Development Block Grant and JOB Loan programs and provides staff support for the Planning Board, Zoning Board, and the Historic District and Conservation Commissions.

The purpose of this handbook is to explain the process to obtain approval to develop property in the City of Rochester and to provide an overview and handy resource reference guide to development and business activity within the city. This process is administered through the City's Planning and Development Department located in Rochester City Hall.

The Planning and Development Department's mission is to coordinate the physical development of Rochester pursuant to the goals of promoting orderly growth, fostering efficient use of infrastructure, maintaining property values, enhancing the business climate, preserving natural and cultural resources, encouraging beauty in the built environment, and creating a special "sense of place" for the present and future residents, landowners, businesses, and industries.

Through the review process, the Planning and Development Department seeks to help those wishing to develop their property. The various types of review are as follows:

- Projects that require Planning Board Approval
- Projects that require Minor Site Review
- Activities in the Special Downtown District
- Special uses such as home occupations and family daycare
- Downtown Historic District review and approvals

In all cases, it is strongly recommended that requests for approval be preceded by a Letter of Intent to the Planning and Development Department. The Planning and Development Department will reply in writing within 10 business days about which procedures and particular requirements apply and forward a copy of the appropriate application.

Site Plan and Subdivision Applications

Activity Subject to Review

Review and approval by the City of Rochester Planning Board or the Rochester Planning and Development Department is required for the following activities:

- Development of land
- Building and structure construction
- Building and structure additions, including signage
- Site changes
- Creation of driveways and parking lots
- Changes in the use of a site, structure or building
- Earth excavation
- Road construction
- Subdivision
- Lot line adjustments
- Lot combinations
- Home Occupations
- Changes to buildings, signage, and fencing located in the Historic District

What type and level of review is necessary for my project?

Start with a Letter of Intent

The Department of Planning and Development has created an outline for the submission of a "Letter of Intent". You can download the letter at Letter of Intent, pick one up in person, or we can mail or FAX the outline to you. (See Appendix)

Once your Letter of Intent has been received and reviewed, the Planning Department will determine the type and level of review necessary. The appropriate applications are available at the Planning and Development Department in City Hall and on-line at Online Application Forms.

Note: Single family and two family dwellings used only for residential purposes are exempt from review.

Planning Application Procedure

1. A pre-application meeting with staff is not required but is strongly encouraged, particularly on large, complicated, or sensitive projects.

2. Submission of a complete application by the deadline date (usually about a month before the Planning Board Meeting).

   Planning Board Deadlines for 2011: Calendar

   For specific information go to: Site Plan: Site Plan Regulations
   Subdivision : Subdivision Regulations

3. Notification to applicant if proposal does not meet requirements.

4. A Technical Review Group* (TRG) meeting with City Departments attended by agent, or applicant if there is no agent.

5. Applicant creates abutter list with Planning and Development staff assistance and then provides funds necessary for City staff to mail notices to abutters via certified mail.

6. A public hearing before the Planning Board is held.

7. Planning Board may accept application as complete and consider requests for waivers.

8. Planning Board action to approve (almost always with conditions), deny, or continue application to a subsequent meeting. Final action is frequently taken at first meeting. More complicated or controversial applications may take several meetings.

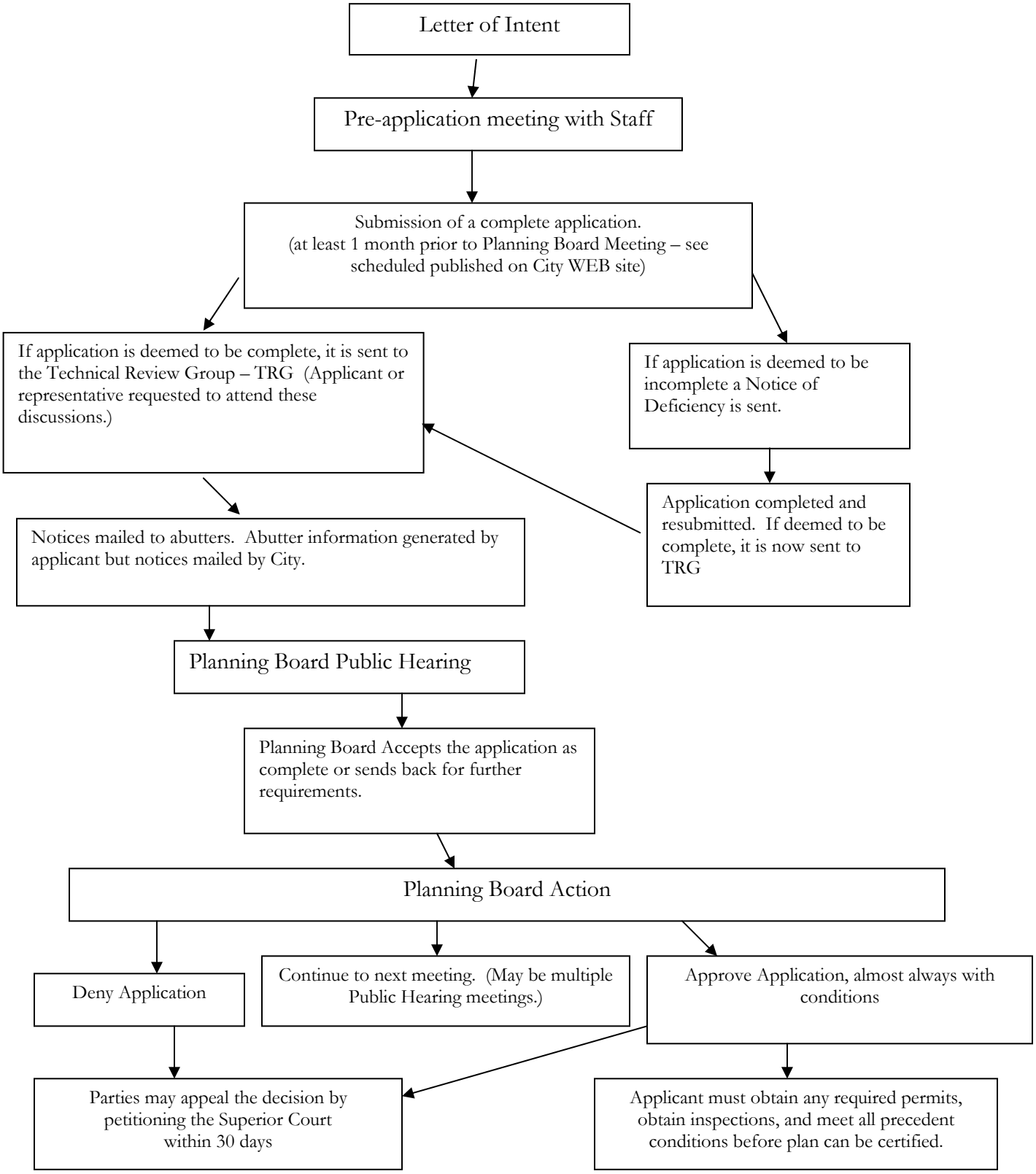
9. Parties seeking to appeal any final Planning Board action must petition the Superior Court within 30 days **after** the date upon which the Board voted to approve or disapprove the application.

Technical Review Group Composition:

Planning Department	(603) 335-1338
Fire Department	(603) 335-7544
Police Department	(603) 330-7132
Conservation Commission (contact the Planning Department)	
Public Works Department (including Water & Sewer)	(603) 332-7578
Economic Development	(603) 335-7522
Code Enforcement Department	(603) 335-7571

For meeting schedule information go to Meeting Schedules

Application Procedure
Major Site Review



Post-Approval

1. The Planning and Development Department mails the Planning Board Notice of Decision.

2. The applicant meets the precedent conditions including but not limited to:

    a) Modifying plans as necessary

    b) Paying any necessary fees

    c) Obtaining state (frequently including DES and DOT*****) and federal approvals

    d) Providing adequate surety

3. The Planning and Development Department signs drawings.

4. The plat for subdivisions is recorded and registry of deeds receipts provided.

5. A preconstruction meeting is held onsite.

6. The Code Enforcement Department issues building permits (for site plans).******

7. The applicant completes the project and submits as-built drawings.

8. The Planning, Public Works, and Fire Departments inspect the site for compliance with the site plan approval in conjunction with the Certificate of Occupancy request.

* State Of New Hampshire Links You May need:

- Starting a Business in NH
- NH DOT Driveway Application Form
- State Environmental Permits

(More state information is located in the Appendix)

** Permits issued by Code Enforcement Department:

Major Building Permit – for all aspects of Commercial and New Dwellings

Minor Building Permit – for miscellaneous item such as Decks, Porches, Pools, Hot Tubs, Fences, Siding, Garages, Interior Renovations of Residential Properties, Residential Additions, Fire Protection Systems, Fire Alarm Systems

Demolition – for Removal of Buildings and Structures

Electrical – for Electrical Work

Mechanical – for Mechanical Work such as Heaters, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning

Plumbing – for Plumbing Work

Renewal - if more time is needed to complete the project

Signs – for Signs: pole, wall, projecting and portable types

You can print these permits from the Code Enforcement page of the City of Rochester web site Permits or visit the Code Enforcement Department at City Hall.

Approval & Inspection Packet

In an attempt to create a more convenient permitting process for one and two family homes, multi-family dwellings, new commercial buildings, and additions to existing commercial buildings, the City of Rochester has created a packet to provide you with all of the permit applications that may be applicable to your project. Not all of the enclosed applications will necessarily apply to every project, and it is important that you contact the appropriate department should you have any questions. Submission of incomplete applications may delay approval of your project.

- Code Enforcement (603) 332-3508
- Rochester Fire Department (603) 330-7184
- Department of Public Works (603) 332-4096

Completed applications and payment may be submitted to the Code Enforcement Department during normal business hours (Monday – Friday, 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m.)

Other Planning Activities

There are three alternative types of applications you may use when the proposed project meets certain criteria: a Minor Site Application, a Special Downtown Application, or a Home Occupation Application. These applications have a different review process than a Major Site Application. Each has its own requirements, but if your proposal fits any of these categories, then you will want to follow the guidelines outlined below. Visit the city's web site to download the forms and applications you need:

Permits & Application Forms

Minor Site Applications

Minor site plans involve an expedited administrative review for three to five residential units, a simple change of use not involving site changes, parking areas of 10 or fewer spaces, building additions of 1,000 square feet or less, and other small and fairly straightforward projects.

The applicant notifies abutters by certified mail. Then, an on-site meeting* is held at least 10 days after the certified mail is sent. Final action is taken shortly thereafter. Any party may appeal the decision of the Minor Site Committee to the full Planning Board if the appeal is filed within 20 days of the decision. Also, any Planning Board member may request that a minor site application be referred to the full Board for review.

**On-Site Meeting includes representatives from various city departments including Planning and Development, Public Works, Code Enforcement, Fire, Police, Conservation Commission and Economic Development.*

Special Downtown Applications

The Special Downtown process allows for an expedited administrative review for projects in those areas classified on the Rochester Zoning Map as Business 1, Business 2, and Industrial 3 adjacent to North and South Main Streets in Rochester proper and Main Streets in Gonic and East Rochester and where the Planning and Development Department Director determines that no significant adverse impact is involved. There are no fees, notices to abutters, nor public hearings involved in the review. However, an on-site meeting is frequently scheduled with the applicant so City department representatives fully understand the proposed development or change in use. Any development is eligible, but generally significant changes will be referred to the Planning Board.

Application Procedure
Minor Site

Letter of Intent

↓

Administrative review for smaller projects *

↓

At least 10 days in advance,
notices are mailed to abutters.

↓

On-site meeting is held with various city department representatives **

↓

Final Action is taken shortly thereafter.

↓

Any party may appeal the decision of the Minor Site Committee to the Planning Board within 20 days of the decision.

Any Planning Board member may request that a minor site application be referred to the Board for review.

***** Minor plans include:

- 3-5 residential units
- a simple change of use not involving site changes
- parking areas of 10 or fewer spaces
- building addition of 1,000 SF or less

****** On-Site Meeting includes representatives from city departments:

- Planning
- Fire
- Police
- Conservation Commission
- Economic Development
- Public Works

Home Occupations

Home occupations involve a very simple administrative review. However, in situations where significant issues are raised, an application may be referred to the Planning Board. Staff decisions may be appealed to the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

An application is filed with the fee plus an amount for notifying the abutters. You will receive an information checklist with the application form. In ten days to two weeks, your application will be reviewed with Code Enforcement to see if it meets the criteria for a Home Occupation. Abutters have ten days to respond to their notice. A common concern for a home occupation is parking and traffic. See more specific concerns in the Definition section below.

Once these steps are completed you will be sent a Notice of Decision. Approval is good for the applicant only and only at that location, that is, it is applicant and site specific. You will not be required to file for any renewals as long as there are no changes.

The application form and additional information is available at:

Home Occupation Application

Definition of a Home Occupation. Any use conducted entirely within a dwelling or an accessory building which is clearly incidental and secondary to the use of the dwelling purposes and which does not change the character thereof, and in connection with which there is no outside display or storage, nor emission of dust, noise, fumes, vibration or smoke beyond the lot line. Such home occupation shall not employ more than two (2) persons who are not members of the family nor occupy a floor area greater than twenty-five percent (25%) of the floor area of the dwelling unit. Goods sold at retail shall be those manufactured or assembled on the premises. Care of children in the home, provided that no more than three (3) children are cared for, shall be considered a home occupation and shall be considered exempt from parking restrictions and site review. Signs for a home occupation shall be in accordance with the provisions of Section 42.8 of this ordinance.

Zoning Determination

Citizens may request a written formal determination whether a proposed project is permitted. If you are not satisfied with the decision, you have four options:

1. Appeal the "administrative" decision
2. Apply for a variance (tough strict criteria apply)
3. Petition for a map amendment *See definitions below
4. Or petition for a text amendment *See definitions below

Zoning Amendments

Citizens may petition the Rochester City Council for amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. There are two types:

1) A Map Amendment (or rezoning) changes the zoning district for one or more lots of land;

2) A Text Amendment changes the written specifications in the ordinance pertaining to dimensions, uses, and other standards

General Consultation

The staff of the Planning and Development Department is always available to answer any questions you have and to discuss any proposed projects. We strongly encourage the applicant to submit a Letter of Intent to the Planning and Development Department.

Letter of Intent

What fees are involved?

For current fee information, please go to: Fees

Schedule - Adopted 7-19-10.doc for a complete list. Fee Details

Schedules of Various Boards

Please see Board Meeting Schedules

Some Additional General Questions

What requires a Building Permit?

New construction and general renovation work requires the issuance of a building permit. General renovation is defined as work which changes the overall size of a structure or building or portions thereof or which involves the creation of rooms or spaces that did not previously exist. Expansion of existing electrical, plumbing, mechanical or fire protection systems is also considered general renovation. Always check with the Code Enforcement Office to make sure, but examples of the types of work that require a permit are

- Additions of any size
- Enlarging existing structures, rooms or spaces
- Creating new rooms or spaces
- Structural changes or repairs
- Dormers
- Demolition of all or part of a structure
- Changing exits or exit components in any way
- New structures including sheds, gazebos, pools (above and below ground), decks, garages, carports, etc
- Fire protection system work
- Signs
- Fences

What can I do without getting a Building Permit?

Application or notice to the code official is not required for ordinary repairs to structures. Ordinary repairs are defined as work which is associated with the normal maintenance of a property and which affects only the surface or finish characteristic of a structure. Always check with the Code Enforcement Office to make sure, but examples of the types of work where you don't need a permit are:

Building:

1. Retaining walls that are not over 4 feet in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge.
2. Water tanks supported directly upon grade if the capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons and the ratio of height to diameter or width does not exceed 2 to 1.
3. Walkways
4. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops and similar finish work.
5. Prefabricated swimming pools that are less than 24 inches deep.
6. Swings and other playground equipment.
7. Window awnings supported by an exterior wall which do not project more than 54 inches from the exterior wall and do not require additional support.

Electrical:

1. Listed cord-and-plug connected temporary decorative lighting.
2. Reinstallation of attachment plug receptacles but not the outlets therefore.
3. Replacement of branch circuit overcurrent devices of the required capacity in the same location.
4. Electrical wiring, devices, appliances, apparatus or equipment operating at less than 25 volts and not capable of supplying more than 50 watts of energy.

Minor repair work, including the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approve permanently installed receptacles.

Gas:

1. Portable: heating, cooking or clothes drying appliances.
2. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
3. Portable-fuel-cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.

Mechanical:

1. Portable heating appliances.
2. Portable ventilation appliances.
3. Portable cooling units.
4. Steam, hot- or chilled-water piping within any heating or cooling equipment regulated by this code.
5. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
6. Portable evaporative coolers.
7. Self-contained refrigeration systems containing 10 pounds or less of refrigerant or that are actuated by motors of 1 horsepower or less.
8. Portable-fuel-cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.

Plumbing:

1. The stopping of leaks in drains, water, soil, waste or vent pipe; provided, however, that if any concealed trap, drainpipe, water, soil, waste or vent pipe becomes defective and it becomes necessary to remove and replace the same with new material, such work shall be considered as new work and a permit shall be obtained and inspection made as provided in this code.

2 The clearing of stoppages or the repairing of leaks in pipes, valves or fixtures, and the removal and reinstallation of water closets, provided such repairs do not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes or fixtures.

In general, for a work element to be considered a repair or replacement, the item, which is being repaired, must already exist. The above items are intended to represent individual replacement or repair work. When one or more of the above items are included in general renovations to structures, then all such items will be included in the construction cost.

Ordinary repairs do not include the cutting, removing or altering of any structural beam, joist, rafter or bearing support, or the removal or change of any required means of egress, or requirements. Ordinary repairs also do not include additions to, alterations of, replacement or relocation of any fire protection system, water supply, sewer, drainage, drain leader, gas, soil, waste, vent or similar piping, electric wiring or mechanical equipment or other work affecting public health or general safety.

What are the costs involved with Building Permits?

Note: Fees are subject to change.

Go to Fees for a comprehensive list of fees.

Where do I get a building permit application form?

You can download a copy of the application form by visiting

Building Permit Application Form

Please fill out the application and then return it by mail or in person with your remittance. You can also come into the office to pick up an application form.

(Sample Letter of Intent, Minor Site Permit, and Major Site Permit Forms in Appendix.)

The Historic District

If the property you wish to improve or change is located within the downtown historic district, you may be required to obtain a Certificate of Approval for the work you plan to do from the Historic District Commission. Historic District Map

The primary responsibility of the Commission is to review applications for development within the Historic District. It is the intent of the ordinance to limit review primarily to the building itself and those elements of the building reasonably considered to be key to the architectural integrity of the building. See Ordinance 42.33

No building permits may be issued and no physical development activity nor significant ground disturbance may occur for activities subject to review until a Certificate of Approval has been issued by the Commission. Work may proceed independently on those areas not subject to review (upon receipt of any other needed permits), such as the interior of the building providing it doesn't change the exterior condition.

Purpose

The goal of the Rochester Historic District Ordinance is to foster the preservation of structures and places of historic, architectural, and community value. Through preservation efforts we hope to enhance:

- our sense of pride in this beautiful city;
- property values; and
- the attractiveness of Rochester for homeowners, homebuyers, businesses, and tourists.

Elements Subject to Review

Approval from the HDC is required for any activity affecting the exterior architectural appearance of a building within the district that would be visible from a public way (except for exempted activities specified in the ordinance) including the following:

- the erection of new buildings;
- additions to existing buildings;

- alterations to existing buildings;
- demolition of existing buildings or portions of existing buildings;
- relocation of a building ;
- signs; and
- walls and fences

Process

An application for a Certificate of Approval must be submitted to the Rochester Historic District Commission through the Planning Department, no fewer than 10 days prior to a regular Commission meeting. However, upon a vote of the Commission the deadline may be reduced on a case by case basis for good cause. Application Form

The HDC meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room in City Hall behind Council Chambers. Additional meetings are scheduled as needed. Once an application is submitted, the applicant will be placed on the agenda for the next regular meeting after the deadline. The Commission seeks to take action as soon as possible, which can be in one meeting if all of the necessary documentation and information is submitted in time. Process Overview

It is not required that you hire an architect. However, it may be difficult to provide appropriate drawings and to meet the objectives of the district without the use of an architect, particularly where new construction or additions are involved.

Standards for Review

The HDC follows a set of criteria laid out in the ordinance when reviewing projects. All existing conditions are considered to be “grandfathered” and property owners are never required to bring any existing property into conformity with the ordinance. It is only when a property or business owner initiates a project that the proposal comes before the HDC, and only for the review of elements proposed by the property owner.

Submission Materials

You need to submit only those materials that the commission determines are necessary to conduct an appropriate review. On small or straightforward projects submission of the application form and one or more sketches drawn by the applicant may be sufficient.

Applicants are encouraged to talk with the Planning Department prior to preparing an application package to get a sense of which of the items below are not needed. The application package may include any or all of the items listed below as stipulated by the HDC:

1. Application Form.
2. Elevations. Elevation drawings to scale of each affected facade of the building clearly depicting existing conditions and proposed work.
3. Details. Detail drawings of appropriate elements (such as the balustrade for a handicap ramp).
4. Plans. Site plans drawn to scale clearly depicting existing conditions and proposed work.
5. Photographs. Photographs of the building, where impacted.
6. Samples. Material sample (such as a brick or the actual window), swatch (such as a piece of the proposed awning in the actual color), color boards, and/or manufacturer's cut sheet of materials to be used, as appropriate.
7. Other Items. Any other items which the Commission may reasonably need to conduct its review.

Note that there are no application fees for the review.

Contact Information: Michael Behrendt, Chief of Planning

(603) 335-1338 phone, (603) 335-7585; fax Michael.Behrendt@rochesternh.net.

Sign Permit Process

Do you need a sign permit? **
42.8 Signs **More Info:** Sign Ordinance **Sign Permit:** Download Permit

No if:

- On site signs for internal use only
- Changes in copy on changeable signs
- Replacement signs substantially the same as the one being replaced
- Contractor signs
- Portable signs (requires application)
- Holiday decorations & lights
- Historic markers, tablets & statues
- Legal notices
- Political signs (see ordinance for requirements)
- Real Estate signs
- Traditional Awning Sign

***See Exemptions from review section of sign ordinance for complete list.*

Yes if:

- Wall Signs (maximum of 2 per business)
- Directory Signs
- Internally Illuminated signs (allowed only in certain districts)
- Freestanding or Monument Signs
- Projecting Signs
- Roof Signs (permitted only in the Highway Commercial Districts)
- Pole Signs

***See sign ordinance for complete list.*

Prohibited Signs:

- Off Premise signs
- Billboards
- Any sign that could be hazardous or distracting to motorists
- Any sign which obstructs the view of a traffic sign
- Flashing or strobe-type lights that could resemble traffic signals
- Any sign that uses attention seeking words such as "stop, caution, danger, help or sex".
- Pornographic nature signs
- Causing glare to a public road or neighboring property
- Any sign that emits sound or visible matter such as smoke
- Vehicle signs intended to primarily advertise a business as a replacement for an actual sign
- Signs towed behind a vehicle
- Certain lights, any snipe signs and any arrow signs

Sign Permit Process continued

If you have determined that your proposed sign is allowed and that you need a sign permit, the first thing you should do is contact the Planning Department to discuss what type of sign is allowed in your zoning district.

Tip: Before ordering your sign to be built, check with the City Planning Department to make sure it conforms with regulations in your zoning district.

↓

Obtain and fill out a sign permit
Sign Permit: Download Permit

↓

Are you located in the Historic District? If so, you will need to meet their zoning requirements

↓

Historic District Review (HDC) and Approval
Historic Sign Guidelines

↓

The Code Enforcement Department issues a sign permit after HDC approval (if required), and it has been determined that your sign meets all zoning requirements.

City Code Chapters

42.1 Purpose and Authority
42.2 Zoning Districts and Zoning Map
42.3 Interpretation of Zoning District Boundaries
42.4 Lots in Two Zoning Districts
42.5 Application of Regulations
42.6 Definitions
42.7 Nonconforming Uses
42.8 Signs **More Info:** Sign Ordinance **Sign Permit:** Download Permit
42.9 Off Street Parking and Loading
42.10 Fences
42.11 Earth Removal
42.12 Performance Standards
42.13 Zoning District Regulations - General
42.14 Permitted Uses - Table 1
42.15 Permitted Uses - Detail
42.16 Dimensional Regulations - Table 2
42.17 Dimensional Regulations - Detail
42.18 Airport Zoning
42.19 Conservation Overlay District
42.20 Regulatory Floodway Zone
42.21 Aquifer Protection Zone
42.22 Special Downtown District **Map Info:** Downtown
42.23 Special Exceptions
42.24 Cluster Development
42.24A Wireless Communications
42.25 Administration and Enforcement
42.26 Building Permits
42.27 Certificate of Occupancy
42.28 Board of Adjustment
42.29 Administrative Review
42.30 Interpretation
[73] 42.31 Impact Fees
[75] 42.32 Planned Unit Developments
42.33 Rochester Historic District **More Info:** Historic District
Signs: Historic Sign Guidelines
42.34 Granite Ridge Development Zone (GRD)

Full Zoning Text: Zoning Ordinance

Zoning Map: Map **Tax Map:** Map

Download Permits: Forms

New Hampshire Building Codes

Code Type	Code Model	Amendment Contact
Building/Dwelling Code	IBC 2009 & IRC 2009 with amendments	Fire Marshal's Office, (603) 271-3294 and Department of Safety
	Applies as a mandatory minimum to all buildings except one and two family dwellings	
Structural Code	IBC 2009 & IRC 2009 with amendments	Fire Marshal's Office, (603) 271-3294 and Department of Safety
	Applies as a mandatory minimum to all buildings except one and two family dwellings	
Plumbing Code	IPC 2009 with amendments	State Plumber's Board, (603) 271-3267 and Department of Safety
	Local jurisdictions must get state approval to make code more stringent	
Mechanical Code	IMC 2009 with amendments	Fire Marshal's Office, (603) 271-3294 and Department of Safety
Electrical Code	NEC 2008 with amendments	Fire Marshal's Office, (603) 271-3294 and Department of Safety
Fire/Life Safety Code	NFPA 1, UFC 2003 (State Fire Code)	Fire Marshal's Office, (603) 271-3294 and Department of Safety
Accessibility Code	IBC 2006, ICC/ANSI A117.1-2003	Online
	Applies to publicly-funded buildings, government-owned buildings and public accommodations	
Energy Code	IECC 2009 with amendments	Public Utilities Commission, (603) 271-2431 and Department of Safety
	Applies to commercial and industrial buildings over 4,000 square feet	
Elevator Code	ASME A17.1	Online
Gas Code	State Fire Code	Fire Marshal's Office, (603) 271-3294
Boiler Code	ASME Boiler & Pressure Vessel Code	Online

New Hampshire Building Codes
Notes Concerning New Hampshire Building Codes

• New Hampshire's building codes are mandatory minimums for all buildings unless otherwise indicated.

Effective April 1, 2010, the NH State Building Code has been amended with the 2009 I-codes. The requirements for automatic sprinkler systems in one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses will NOT take effect until April 1, 2012 (check local ordinances).

New Hampshire Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ)

Authorities Having Jurisdiction are those government officials who are the final authority on questions in a particular area (or jurisdiction).

Jurisdictional Area	Contact
Structural	State Fire Marshal's Office Phone: (603) 271-3294
Plumbing	State Board for the Licensing and Regulation of Pl Phone: (603) 271-3267 Fax: (603) 271-6656
Electrical	Electrician Board Phone: (603) 271-3748
Energy	Jon Osgood Utility Analyst, Public Utilities Commission Phone: (603) 271-6550 Fax: (603) 271-3878
Fire Marshal	J William Degnan State Fire Marshal's Office, Division of Fire Safe Phone: (603) 271-3294 Fax: (603) 271-1091
Boiler Inspector	Boilers & Elevators, Dept. of Labor Phone: (603) 271-2584
Elevator Inspector	Boilers & Elevators, Dept. of Labor Phone: (603) 271-2585

State of New Hampshire

Department of Environmental Services

Do You Need Help With State Environmental Permits?

If so, contact the Department of Environmental Services and review their online guidebook at: http://des.nh.gov/business/index.htm

Meeting request form for businesses planning new projects for which multiple environmental permits are required:
http://www4.egov.nh.gov/DES/PreApp

State Environmental Permits:

To help you navigate the complexities of the environmental permitting process, DES can arrange a "pre-application meeting" for you to meet with representative(s) of the specific permit program(s) necessary for your project. Don't know what permits you need? Just fill out the pre-application meeting request form (see above contact information) and we'll bring the right people to the table. This service is free of charge, too. Whether you are homeowner looking for a wetlands permit, or a corporate owner constructing a new business complex that requires multiple permits, we can arrange to bring together the appropriate permit staff from DES, as well as from other state agencies, as needed.

Please complete the on-line form, or contact the Public Information and Permitting Unit directly at timothy.drew@des.nh.gov or call (603) 271-3306 to discuss your upcoming project.

Starting a new business?

The Economic Development Office can assist you with starting a new business. Our professional staff will be pleased to meet with you to discuss your business ideas and provide guidance as you go through the requirements with the city. To help you fulfill your objectives, we offer customized business assistance with:

- Business Start-Ups
- Expansions
- Financing
- Site Selection
- Business Parks
- Community Information
- Coordination of City Services

This is general information.
Your business may have unique needs.
Be sure to do your homework!

Starting a Business

Begin with a visit to the Economic Development Department office to discuss your business ideas and plans. Call 335-7522 to schedule an appointment with our professional staff for customized business assistance.

Create A Business Plan

Free Resources to help you:

Small Business Development Center
Score Counseling

Sample Business Plan

Funding Sources

Private:
Self-funded
Investors & Angels
Info

Traditional:
Bank Loans
Loan Info
Use own equity
MicroCredit Loans

Public:
City Programs City Programs
State Programs SEDC
Federal SBA

Find A Location

Search Our Database

Use Local Real Estate Agent Find one

Home Based Business Permit Form

Obtain Needed Permits and Licenses

Local: Start with Letter of Intent

State Information

Other approvals as needed
License Requirements

Don't forget a Sign Permit
Sign Permit

Helpful information from the State of New Hampshire for those starting a new business can be found at this web site:

http://www.nh.gov/business/index.html

Business

Starting a business? Need licensing or permit information? This page links you to some of the government services and information you need as a business operating in the State of New Hampshire.

Doing Business

- starting and/or expanding a business, employer resources, forms, more...

Economic Development

- grants, assistance, market research more...

Uniform Commercial Code

- guidelines, forms, fees, more...

Business Directory

- NH-based businesses and organizations

Laws and Rules

- state statutes, constitution, rules, more...

Appendix

Letter of Intent download form

Major Building Permit download form

Minor Building Permit download form

State Application For a Driveway Permit download form