**Northampton MA, Site Plan Standards**

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[**http://ecode360.com/11957928**](http://ecode360.com/11957928)

[§ 350-11Site Plan Approval](http://ecode360.com/11957945#11957928)

[§ 350-11.1Purpose.](http://ecode360.com/11957945#11957929)

The purpose of this section is to provide a comprehensive review procedure for construction projects which will have significant impacts on the City, herein defined, to ensure compliance with the goals and objectives of the City, and the provisions of this chapter, to minimize adverse impacts of such development, and to promote development which is harmonious with surrounding areas; in particular to assure proper drainage, safe access, safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian movement, adequate parking and loading spaces, public convenience and safety and adequate consideration of abutting land owners.

[§ 350-11.2Projects requiring site plan approval as intermediate projects.](http://ecode360.com/11957945#11957930)

No building permit, zoning permit, or special permit shall be issued for the following intermediate projects prior to the review and approval of a site plan in accordance with this section:

[A.](http://ecode360.com/11957931#11957931)

Projects which involve new construction or additions of between 2,000 square feet and 5,000 square feet of gross floor area (excluding single-family dwellings, expansions in the CB District that do not involve footprint expansions, and projects used exclusively for agriculture, horticulture or floriculture).

[B.](http://ecode360.com/11957932#11957932)

Projects for which this chapter requires the provision of six to nine additional parking places.

[C.](http://ecode360.com/11957933#11957933)

Projects which require a special permit and which are not otherwise intermediate or major projects except that, notwithstanding any of the requirements of § 350-10.12, the following projects do not require site plan approval: accessory apartments (§§ [**350-5.2**](http://ecode360.com/11957333#11957333) and 350-10.10), accessory structures (§§ [**350-5.2**](http://ecode360.com/11957333#11957333) and [**350-6.7**](http://ecode360.com/11957396#11957396)), accessory uses (§§  350-5.2 and 350-5.3), historic association and nonprofit museum (§§ [**350-5.2**](http://ecode360.com/11957333#11957333)), home business (§ [**350-5.2**](http://ecode360.com/11957333#11957333) and 350-10.12) and signs (§ [**350-7**](http://ecode360.com/11957433#11957433)) of this chapter.

[D.](http://ecode360.com/11957934#11957934)

Any project that is requesting a provision of the zoning that is allowed only with site plan approval and which is not otherwise a major project.

[E.](http://ecode360.com/11957935#11957935)

Planned Village (PV) projects which require a site plan review in accordance with § 350-10.15 and are not otherwise major projects.

[F.](http://ecode360.com/27810581#27810581)

Medical marijuana dispensaries.

[§ 350-11.3Projects requiring site plan approval as major projects.](http://ecode360.com/11957945#11957936)

No building permit, zoning permit, or special permit shall be issued for the following major projects prior to the review and approval of a site plan in accordance with this section:

[A.](http://ecode360.com/11957937#11957937)

Projects which involve new construction or additions of 5,000 square feet or more of gross floor area (excluding expansions in the CB District that do not involve footprint expansions).

[B.](http://ecode360.com/11957938#11957938)

Commercial parking lots and parking garages, including municipal garages.

[C.](http://ecode360.com/11957939#11957939)

Except for the CBD, establishments selling foods prepared on premises where consumption is primarily off the premises and retail establishments selling principally convenience goods.

[D.](http://ecode360.com/11957940#11957940)

Automobile service stations.

[E.](http://ecode360.com/11957941#11957941)

Projects for which this chapter requires 10 or more additional parking spaces over the zoning requirements for the previous use.

[F.](http://ecode360.com/11957942#11957942)

Rural residential incentive development projects.

[G.](http://ecode360.com/11957943#11957943)

Planned business park projects.

[§ 350-11.4Requirements.](http://ecode360.com/11957945#11957944)

These requirements are superimposed over any other requirements of this Zoning Ordinance. The Building Commissioner may not issue any building or zoning permits for any intermediate or major projects until the site plan has been approved by the Planning Board through a simple majority vote of the members present. The site plan process shall be conducted by the Planning Board in conformance with the filing, review and public hearing requirements for a special permit, except in the case of alternative energy research and development (R&D) and manufacturing facilities, as defined in the Green Communities Act.[**[1]**](http://ecode360.com/11957945#ft11957944-1) For alternative energy R&D and/or manufacturing, review periods are guaranteed not to exceed one year from the date of initial application to the date of final Board action. Said applications shall be reviewed within 45 days, and the applicants will be notified of what additional submissions are necessary to meet this one-year final action deadline. The Planning Board shall use the criteria of § [**350-11.6**](http://ecode360.com/11957975#11957975) for approving or disapproving the site plan. As with special permits, any appeal of a site plan decision by the Planning Board shall be made in accordance with MGL c. 40A, § 17. All site plan decisions must be recorded at the Registry of Deeds. In addition, the plans approved as part of the site plan decision shall be recorded with the decision in the form and type of pages as determined by the Planning Board.

[[1]](http://ecode360.com/11957945#ref11957944-1)

*Editor's Note: See Acts of 2008, Ch. 169.*

[§ 350-11.5Procedures.](http://ecode360.com/11957945#11957945)

[A.](http://ecode360.com/11957946#11957946)

Application for site plan approval shall be made to the City Clerk and the Office of Planning and Development on forms provided for that purpose, accompanied by the required fee. The Planning Board shall adopt specific rules governing paper and electronic application and the number of copies.

[B.](http://ecode360.com/11957947#11957947)

The application for site plan approval shall be accompanied by a site plan, drawings and supporting documentation in a form specified by rules and regulations which shall show, among other data, the following:

[(1)](http://ecode360.com/11957948#11957948)

Locus plan;

[(2)](http://ecode360.com/11957949#11957949)

Site plan(s) at a scale of one inch equals 40 feet (or greater) showing the following:

[(a)](http://ecode360.com/11957950#11957950)

Name and address of the owner and the developer, name of the project, and date and scale of plans;

[(b)](http://ecode360.com/11957951#11957951)

The location and boundaries of the lot, adjacent streets or ways, the location and owners names of all adjacent properties and those within 300 feet of the property line, and all zoning district boundaries;

[(c)](http://ecode360.com/11957952#11957952)

Existing and proposed structures, including setbacks from property lines, structure elevations, and all exterior entrances and exits. Elevation plans of all exterior facades of proposed structures are required for towers and strongly encouraged for other structures;

[(d)](http://ecode360.com/11957953#11957953)

Present and proposed use of the land and buildings;

[(e)](http://ecode360.com/11957954#11957954)

Existing and proposed topography at two-foot contour intervals, showing wetlands, streams, surface water bodies, drainage swales, floodplains, and unique natural land features (for intermediate projects the permit granting authority may accept generalized topography instead of requiring contour lines);

[(f)](http://ecode360.com/11957955#11957955)

Location of parking and loading areas, public and private ways, driveways, walkways, access and egress points, including proposed surfacing;

[(g)](http://ecode360.com/11957956#11957956)

Location and description of all stormwater drainage facilities (including stormwater detention facilities, water quality structures, drainage calculations where applicable, and drainage easements), potential water quality impacts, planned best management practices (BMPs) during the construction phase, and the planned BMPs to be used to manage runoff created after development. For major projects, applicants shall incorporate green infrastructure and low-impact design to the extent feasible. For major projects that do not trigger a separate stormwater permit, applicants shall submit information on all analysis conducted to incorporate low-impact design and green infrastructure. Major projects that do not trigger separate stormwater permitting must provide a proposed inspection schedule for the project during construction and upon completion. Inspections shall be performed by a qualified professional as confirmed by the Planning Board;

[(h)](http://ecode360.com/29937787#29937787)

Location and description of public and private utilities, sewage disposal facilities and water supply;

[(i)](http://ecode360.com/11957957#11957957)

Existing and proposed landscaping, including trees and other plantings (including the size and type of plantings), stone walls, buffers, screening, and fencing. Landscape plans must be designed and stamped by a certified landscape architect or arborist. An adequate schedule for maintenance, during the first two years, must be specified on the plans;

[(j)](http://ecode360.com/11957958#11957958)

Location, dimensions, height, color, illumination of existing and proposed signs;

[(k)](http://ecode360.com/11957959#11957959)

Provisions for refuse removal, with facilities for screening of refuse when appropriate;

[(l)](http://ecode360.com/11957960#11957960)

An erosion control plan (for major projects only) and any other measures taken to protect natural resources and water supplies;

[(m)](http://ecode360.com/11957961#11957961)

A photometric plan showing conformance with § [**350-12.2**](http://ecode360.com/11958070#11958070).

[(3)](http://ecode360.com/11957962#11957962)

Estimated daily and peak hour vehicle trips generated by the proposed use, traffic patterns for vehicles and pedestrians showing adequate access to and from the site, and adequate vehicular and pedestrian circulation within the site. In addition, major projects, as defined above, shall prepare a traffic impact statement including the following information:

[(a)](http://ecode360.com/11957963#11957963)

Traffic flow patterns at the site including entrances and egresses, loading and unloading areas, and curb cuts on site and within 100 feet of the site.

[(b)](http://ecode360.com/11957964#11957964)

A plan to minimize traffic safety impacts of the proposed project through such means as physical design and layout concepts, staggered employee work schedules, promoting use of public transit or van- or carpooling, or other appropriate means. For new commercial, office, and industrial buildings or uses over 10,000 square feet, this plan shall evaluate alternative mitigation methods to reduce traffic by 35%, including:

[[1]](http://ecode360.com/11957965#11957965)

Public transit, van- and car-pool incentive programs, including parking facilities and weather-protected transit shelters;

[[2]](http://ecode360.com/11957966#11957966)

Encouraging flexible hours and workweeks;

[[3]](http://ecode360.com/11957967#11957967)

Encouraging pedestrian and bicycle access to the site;

[[4]](http://ecode360.com/11957968#11957968)

Provision of integrated land uses, including on-site services, retail, and housing.

[(c)](http://ecode360.com/11957969#11957969)

A detailed assessment of the traffic safety impacts of the proposed project or use on the carrying capacity of any adjacent highway or road, including the projected number of motor vehicle trips to enter or depart from the site for daily-hour and peak-hour traffic levels, road capacities, and impacts on intersections. Said assessment may be based on the proposed mitigation [in the plan required by Subsection [**B(2)**](http://ecode360.com/11957949#11957949) above].

[(d)](http://ecode360.com/11957970#11957970)

An interior traffic and pedestrian circulation plan designed to minimize conflicts and safety problems.

[(e)](http://ecode360.com/11957971#11957971)

Safe and adequate pedestrian access, including provisions for sidewalks and/or bike paths to provide access to adjacent properties and adjacent residential neighborhoods, as applicable, and between individual businesses within a development.

[(4)](http://ecode360.com/11957972#11957972)

Other information as may be necessary to determine compliance with the provisions of this chapter.

[C.](http://ecode360.com/11957973#11957973)

Site plans submitted for major projects shall be prepared (and stamped) by a registered architect, landscape architect, or professional engineer.

[D.](http://ecode360.com/11957974#11957974)

Upon written request, the Planning Board may, at its discretion, waive the submission by the applicant of any of the required information, provided that the applicant provides some written information on each of the items in Subsections [**B(3)(a)**](http://ecode360.com/11957963#11957963), [**(b)**](http://ecode360.com/11957964#11957964) and [**(c)**](http://ecode360.com/11957969#11957969) above and explains why a waiver is appropriate.

[§ 350-11.6Approval criteria.](http://ecode360.com/11957945#11957975)

In conducting the site plan approval, the Planning Board shall find that the following conditions are met:

[A.](http://ecode360.com/11957976#11957976)

The requested use protects adjoining premises against seriously detrimental uses. If applicable, this shall include provision for surface water drainage, sound and sight buffers and preservation of views, light, and air; and

[B.](http://ecode360.com/11957977#11957977)

The requested use will promote the convenience and safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement within the site and on adjacent streets, cycle tracks and bike paths, minimize traffic impacts on the streets and roads in the area. If applicable, this shall include considering the location of driveway openings in relation to traffic and adjacent streets, cross-access easements to abutting parcels, access by public safety vehicles, the arrangement of parking and loading spaces, connections to existing transit or likely future transit routes, and provisions for persons with disabilities; and:

[(1)](http://ecode360.com/11957978#11957978)

The Planning Board may allow reduced parking requirements in accordance with § [**350-8.6**](http://ecode360.com/11957561#11957561), Shared parking.

[(2)](http://ecode360.com/11957979#11957979)

The project, including any concurrent road improvements, will not decrease the level of service (LOS) of all area City and state roads or intersections affected by the project below the existing conditions when the project is proposed and shall consider the incremental nature of development and cumulative impacts on the LOS. The project proponent must demonstrate that all cumulative and incremental traffic impacts have been mitigated. If those impacts are not mitigated, the Planning Board shall require in-lieu-of payments to fund a project's proportional share of necessary improvements to mitigate off-site traffic impacts, including provision of public transit and pedestrian or bicycle paths, in lieu of requiring off-site improvements. All in-lieu-of payments will be expended with the approval of the Mayor and City Council only after first being introduced for recommendation to the Transportation and Parking Commission, consistent with Planning Board conditions. In-lieu-of traffic mitigation payment shall be assessed by the Planning Board after a fact-based analysis of a specific project but shall not exceed that shown in the table below. Past experience has been that mitigation of all traffic impacts would be higher than the maximum amount allowed and so many projects are assessed the maximum allowed by the table. The Board may exempt residential projects whose traffic impacts are not greater than if they were developed as an as-of-right development without site plan approval and subdivision approval.

|  | **Project Location** | **Required Payment** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Any medical marijuana project regardless of the district (regardless of other entries below) | $2,000 per peak trip |
|  | CB, GB, EB, GI and OI Zoning Districts; PV District, except for medical and dental offices; and NB District, except for uses with gas pumps | No mitigation |
|  | M, URC, and URB Zoning Districts | $1,000 per peak trip |
|  | HB Zoning District; PV District for project for medical and dental offices; NB Districts for uses with gas pumps; BP Districts with nonexempt uses; and BP, SR, URA, SC and RR Zoning Districts for sites (1) within 500 feet of a transit stop, or (2) within 500 feet of an asphalt or concrete City off-road rail trail or bicycle path, or (3) abutting a sidewalk that extends without a break from the project to either downtown Northampton or downtown Florence | $2,000 per peak trip |
|  | Any other site in SR, URA, SC, and RR Zoning Districts and any other BP residential use | $3,000 per peak trip |
|  | Notes Peak trips are the number of one-way trips into or out of the project during the project's peak traffic demand, typically but not always weekday afternoon “rush hour.” Peak-hour trips are calculated based on the table below or, if (and only if) the table does not address a project, the Institute of Traffic Engineers' (ITE) trip generation data. The Planning Board retains the ability to use alternative calculations if clear evidence to the contrary is provided (for example, considering lower traffic generation from pass-by trips, late-night shift changes, and mixed-use projects). | |

|  | **Project Type** | **Peak-Hour Trips** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Residential | 1/dwelling unit |
|  | Congregate and assisted living | 0.6/dwelling unit |
|  | Grocery, personal services, retail and auto sales, medical marijuana dispensary | 12/1,000 square feet |
|  | Medical marijuana growing and processing facilities | 1/1,000 square feet |
|  | Restaurants and bars | 20/1,000 square feet |
|  | Gas, convenience stores, fast-food restaurants | 100/1,000 square feet |
|  | Medical and dental offices | 5/1,000 square feet |
|  | Other offices | 2/1,000 square feet |
|  | Industrial, manufacturing, tradesman, professional (but not medical and dental) offices, and municipal uses | Exempt |
|  | Warehouses | 0.6/1,000 square feet |
|  | Schools, day-cares, churches, libraries, etc. | 10/1,000 square feet |
|  | Hotel/Motel | 0.5/room |

[(3)](http://ecode360.com/15628841#15628841)

Access by nonmotorized means must be accommodated with facilities such as bike racks, sidewalk connections from the building to the street, cycle tracks, and bike paths that are clearly delineated through materials and/or markings to distinguish the vehicular route from the nonvehicular route.

[C.](http://ecode360.com/11957980#11957980)

The site will function harmoniously in relation to other structures and open spaces to the natural landscape, existing buildings and other community assets in the area as it relates to landscaping, drainage, sight lines, building orientation, massing, egress, and setbacks. Rear and/or side wall facades within 50 feet of a completed or planned section of a cycle track or bike path shall have features that invite pedestrian access from that side of the building; and

[D.](http://ecode360.com/11957981#11957981)

The requested use will not overload, and will mitigate adverse impacts on, the City's resources, including the effect on the City's water supply and distribution system, sanitary and storm sewage collection and treatment systems, fire protection, streets and schools. The construction materials and methods for water lines, sanitary sewers, storm sewers, fire protection, sidewalks, private roads, and other infrastructure shall be those set forth in the Northampton Subdivision Regulations[**[1]**](http://ecode360.com/11957945#ft11957981-1) (even for projects that are not part of a subdivision) unless the Planning Board finds that a different standard is more appropriate. Major projects that do not trigger separate stormwater permitting shall have conditions that stipulate when inspections shall be completed and submitted to the City. Annual reports, as necessary depending on the stormwater management system, shall be submitted to the City.

[[1]](http://ecode360.com/11957945#ref11957981-1)

*Editor's Note: See Ch.*[***290***](http://ecode360.com/13265223#13265223)*, Subdivision of Land.*

[E.](http://ecode360.com/11957982#11957982)

The requested use meets any special regulations set forth in this chapter.

[F.](http://ecode360.com/11957983#11957983)

Compliance with the following technical performance standards:

[(1)](http://ecode360.com/11957984#11957984)

Curb cuts onto streets shall be minimized. Access to businesses shall use common driveways, existing side streets, or loop service roads shared by adjacent lots when possible. More than one curb cut shall be permitted only when necessary to minimize traffic and safety impacts.

[(2)](http://ecode360.com/11957985#11957985)

Pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic movement on site must be separated, to the extent possible, and sidewalks must be provided between businesses within a development and from public sidewalks, cycle tracks and bike paths.

[(3)](http://ecode360.com/11957986#11957986)

Major projects, except in the Central Business District, must be designed so there is no increase in peak flows from the one- or two- and ten-year Soil Conservation Service design storm from predevelopment conditions (the condition at the time a site plan approval is requested). Green infrastructure and low-impact design shall be incorporated to the extent feasible to ensure runoff is handled on site. At the very minimum, the runoff from up to a one-inch rain storm (first flush) shall be detained on site for an average of six hours. These requirements shall not apply if the project will discharge into a City storm drain system that the Planning Board finds can accommodate the expected discharge with no adverse impacts. In addition, catch basins shall incorporate sumps of a minimum of four feet and, if they will remain privately owned, a gas trap.

[(4)](http://ecode360.com/27810583#27810583)

Medical marijuana operations shall meet the following criteria:

[(a)](http://ecode360.com/27810584#27810584)

Building facades and property must be consistent with the character of the neighborhood, including such items as transparent storefront windows with a view into the interior of the building. Security measures must appear from outside of the building to be consistent with the character of the neighborhood. This does not create any restriction or compromise on security measures but does require that such measures be camouflaged to blend into the background.

[(b)](http://ecode360.com/27810585#27810585)

Buildings must be ventilated with such filters or scrubbers to ensure that there are no odors from marijuana in any place where the public or clients are present and no public exposure to any pesticides, herbicides or other chemicals.

[(c)](http://ecode360.com/27810586#27810586)

No medical marijuana dispensary and/or treatment center shall be located within 200 feet of any elementary school, middle school, or high school; there are no other buffer limitations.

[G.](http://ecode360.com/11957987#11957987)

(Reserved)

[H.](http://ecode360.com/11958046#11958046)

(Reserved)

[I.](http://ecode360.com/11958054#11958054)

Obscene displays; blocking or shading of windows.

[(1)](http://ecode360.com/11958055#11958055)

No signs, text, graphics, pictures, publications, videotapes, CDs, DVDs, movies, covers, merchandise or other objects, implements, items or advertising depicting or describing sexual conduct or sexual excitement as defined in MGL c. 272, § 31, shall be displayed in the windows or on any building or be visible to the public from the street, pedestrian sidewalks, walkways, or bike paths or from other areas outside such establishments.

[(2)](http://ecode360.com/11958056#11958056)

Further, windows may only be blocked or shaded by approval of the Planning Board through site plan approval.