A Team Approach

In June of 2007, the City announced a two-stage initiative to streamline the City’s permitting process making it clear and accessible, realizing that the permitting process must be open and transparent for citizens, while facilitating business expansion and recruitment. To help accomplish this, a Permitting Task Force was established to serve as “one-stop” shop where applicants may meet with representatives from departments that are relevant to their specific project.

The Permitting Task Force is comprised of a representative from each city department, board and/or commission that is regularly involved in New Bedford’s permitting approval process. Task force pre-application meetings encourage proactive planning with applicants and help to ensure that projects move efficiently through the city’s permitting process.

The Permitting Task Force is primarily made up of representatives from the following departments, boards and commissions, as your project requires:

- Planning Board
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Conservation Commission
- Historical Commission
- Traffic Commission
- Building Department/Inspectional Services
- Public Safety
- Department of Public Infrastructure
- Board of Health
- Licensing
- New Bedford Economic Development Council
- Any other board, commission or department as needed

The Permitting Task Force holds weekly meetings for applicants seeking permits, for both small and large projects. These permitting task force meetings ensure that applicants are aware of the permits that they must apply for, in which order they should apply, and what they need to provide to make certain that their application(s) is complete. To set up a task force meeting, please contact the Office of City Planning at 508-979-1488.

Best Practices

Establish Good Communication Early on

We encourage applicants to begin working with us as early as possible in the development of a project to establish good communication with the necessary city agencies to aid you through what can be a complex and unfamiliar process. This is critical to ensure the best means of efficiently and swiftly navigating the permitting process are used for your project.

Create a Permitting Plan

Whether it is a small addition or a large commercial development, using the permitting chart will guide you through the required actions/approvals for a project prior to submitting a formal application.

Utilize the Permitting Task Force for complex development projects

We encourage applicants with a complex development project to attend a pre-application meeting of the Permitting Task Force. This allows for an informal review of a development in its conceptual design stage, identifying potential issues, both for the municipality, the applicant, and impacted stakeholders.

Work with Experienced Professionals

In many cases projects have been delayed due to incomplete or insufficient application materials being submitted. This can become frustrating for the applicant and the agency reviewing the application. It is important for applicant to work with engineers, architects, and planners who have experience with the type of project being proposed and the permitting process.

Submit a complete application

Many projects that initially provide complete applications often gain approval through the permitting process within a 60-day timeframe. However it should be noted that projects with complicated environmental constraints requiring multiple states and federal agency review or other issues beyond the control of the City may have an extended timeframe.
Should you have any questions we encourage you to contact the City Planning Office for assistance.