



**NORTH
ADAMS**

Doing Business in North Adams: *A How-to Guide*



November 11, 2022

Welcome to North Adams. We're excited you've chosen our City to establish your business or continue business operations. As the Mayor, it's my job to ensure your experience is a positive one. As part of that effort, our office has created ***Doing Business in North Adams: A How-to Guide*** to introduce you to the departments and agencies with which you may interact, explain what each does, provide examples of permits they issue, and contact information so, should you have questions that go beyond this guide or [our website](#), you can quickly reach the right person.

As a lifelong North Adams resident, I'm eager to help you get to know North Adams, home to nearly 13,000 people -- and growing. We're the site one of the most visited museums in the country, MassMOCA, and in summer 2022 were chosen by *Travel and Leisure* as one of the [nine best small art towns across the country for art lovers](#). We annually attract thousands of visitors from across the State, the Northeast, and U.S. You can learn more about our City and its economy by visiting [Berkshire Benchmarks](#).

Best wishes for a successful business and thank you for making North Adams your destination for success.

Mayor Jennifer Macksey



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Introduction

Welcome to North Adams

For the smallest city in Massachusetts, we've got a lot of big things going here in North Adams. Located in the Northwest corner of the Berkshires, North Adams is one of the region's most vibrant hubs for contemporary art, indie music, outdoor recreation, fine dining, independent retail, antiques, and more.

We think it's a great place to live, work, and play -- and know you will, too.

About this Guide

The City of North Adams developed this *Doing Business in North Adams: A How-to Guide* to help business owners – new and established – navigate the sometimes-intimidating process of getting a business up and running or keeping it operating successfully as it grows. One of the first steps before hanging a shingle is ensuring the business can operate in its chosen location by checking the [City's zoning map](#) and guidelines. Second, commercial operators and small business owners need the right [permits, licenses, and/or applications](#) to comply with State and/or City guidelines. Finally, business owners should contact the Department of Buildings, if they need to do work, to confirm that what is planned will be safe and complies with local and State codes. Ignore those three steps, and you're likely to be spending time, money, or resources unnecessarily.

Our goal is for *Doing Business in North Adams* to help you avoid mistakes by introducing you to the departments, leaders, and staff you'll be engaging throughout the lifespan of your business. And because nearly every project requires a permit, the guide explains the most common ones each department and/or commission issues and the fees associated with them. To make doing business easier, [all major forms, permits and licenses can now be filled out online on our website](#). Once completed, forms can be emailed to the department or printed and dropped off in-person, as you prefer.

If you have questions after reading this guide and exploring the North Adams website, please email, call, or visit City Hall at 10 Main Street to meet with department representatives to discuss your situation. Most staff work full-time, but to ensure the person you need is available, email or call first to make an appointment. We include emails and phone numbers for each department in this guide.

Board of License Commissioners

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Board of License Commissioners is responsible for a wide variety of business types ranging from amusement and entertainment to sale of alcoholic beverages and auto dealerships.

The License Commission grants licenses relating to alcoholic beverages under General Laws chapter 138 and General Laws chapter 140, which are not placed within the jurisdiction of another municipal officer or agency, including those designated by City ordinances.

The Board of License Commissioners (the Licensing Board) consists of three members appointed by the Mayor and subject to confirmation by the City Council. Members of the Board of License Commissioners serve six- year terms and require reappointment by the Mayor and confirmation by the City Council. Vacancies on the Board may be filled in the same manner, but only for the balance of an unexpired term. No person, while a member of the Board of License Commissioners, shall have any financial interest, direct or indirect, in the sale or distribution of alcoholic beverages in any form.

Permitting Process:

The North Adams License Commission meets monthly or sooner, if agenda permits, to accept and approve applications for applications. More complete information on licenses and requirements is available from the License Board Agent located in the Public Services Department. They can be reached at 413-662-3047.

Contact:

[Rosemari Dickinson](#), Secretary

Phone:

413-662-3000 x3234

Mailing Address:

City of North Adams
Board of License Commissioners
10 Main Street
North Adams, MA 01247

Meetings:

Meetings as needed
Room 202 - 2nd flr. City Hall

Agendas and Minutes:

When available, [Agendas and Minutes are posted here](#) with Meeting Materials, otherwise, they are available by contacting Rosemari Dickinson.

Sample Permits and Fees:

Permits	Fee
Alcohol: Various ABCC website	\$1,575: All-Alcohol Restaurant, Innholder & General on Premise / \$1,200 Clubs / \$900 Beer/Wine Restaurant & Package Store / \$750 Pouring Permit / \$1,600 All-Alcohol Package Store
Automatic Amusement incl. Billiards / Pool Halls	\$85
Class I, II, & III Auto Dealer's	\$100
Common Victualler	\$75
Theatre Serving Beer, Wine, Alcohol	\$900 Beer / Wine
Weekday / Sunday Entertainment	\$100: City / \$85. per machine. \$100: State

City Clerk

Roles and Responsibilities:

The responsibilities of the City Clerk's office are established by City Charter and Massachusetts General Law. The City Clerk supports the City Council by providing the following: agenda preparation, recording minutes, and archiving petitions, orders, and ordinances. Visit this office for business licenses; election information; voter registration; annual city census; dog licenses; and birth, marriage, and death records (long-form only, certified copies are provided). Business-related permits that go through the City Clerk's Office include General Business Certificate, license to drive a taxicab, and registration to manufacture or sell or keep or store explosives and flammables.

PLEASE NOTE: The City Clerk's Office has a NO REFUND POLICY. A request for a record should only be made if you know that the City of North Adams has the record or have confirmed with the City Clerk's Office that the record exists in North Adams.

Permitting Process:

The City Clerk receives filing for Variances and Special Permits for the Zoning Board of Appeals (see previous page). The City Clerk also keeps and sells copies of the General and

Zoning Ordinances, Subdivision Rules and Regulations, and the Zoning Map. All decisions of the Board of Appeals, Planning Board, and Historic District Commission, as well as the minutes of all City boards and committees, are kept on file with the City Clerk. In addition to the permits noted above, some businesses require a Special Permit from the Board of Appeals for a home occupation. For this reason, the Building Inspector should be consulted early in the process of planning and establishing a business, particularly those run from home.

Contact:

City Clerk
[Tina Leonesio](#)

Mailing Address:

City Clerk
 City of North Adams
 10 Main Street, Room 104
 North Adams, MA 01247

Phone:

413-662-3000 x1

Sample Permits and Fees:

Permit	Fee
Business Certificate	\$35
Taxicab License	\$25 first cab; \$10 each additional

Planning Board

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Planning Board is responsible for guiding growth and development in the community in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L.C. 41 and relevant City ordinances. The Planning Board reviews and approves site plans and acts as the special permit granting authority for the City of North Adams. The Board also acts as an advisory body on other municipal land use, development, and planning regulations.

The Planning Board consists of nine members appointed by the Mayor and subject to confirmation by the City Council. Members of the Planning Board serve five-year terms and require reappointment by the Mayor and confirmation by the City Council. Vacancies occurring on the Board may be filled in the same manner, but only for the balance of an unexpired term.

Permitting Process:

The Planning Board generally reviews several different types of permit applications for residential, commercial, and industrial projects that must be recorded in the Registry of Deeds and the City Clerk before a building permit is issued.

Informational meetings regarding Planning Board activities and procedures should be arranged with the Director of the Community Development by appointment. The Planning Board issues permits under the subdivision control law, North Adams' subdivision regulations, the zoning act, North Adams' zoning ordinances and scenic roads and shade tree laws. The Planning Board develops policy from its comprehensive master plan, along with other planning documents, and bases its parameters based upon these planning tools.

The Planning Board, under the Subdivision Control Law, also issues approvals for subdivisions of land and Approval Not Required (ANR) lots. The Planning Board is also the special permit granting authority for Site Plan approvals.

Site Plan Approval: The Planning Board reviews commercial and industrial projects under the Site Plan Approval process. The Site Plan Approval process also deals with Special Permits for new construction, additions, change in-use, and signage requirements. The proposal is reviewed by various City departments to evaluate the design and impacts of the proposal on traffic, drainage, parking, etc. Large projects should request section 3D "Site Plan Approval" of the City's Zoning Ordinance for details and requirements. For additions to a structure larger than 200 ft., email planningboard@northadams-ma.gov.

Subdivision Approval: A project which involves the construction of a subdivision road (a new road) needs to go through the Planning Board's Subdivision Approval process, which generally involves a preliminary and definitive approval stage. If the project does not propose a new street and has the required frontage on an existing public way a Form A, Subdivision Control Law Approval Not Required, is all that is required from the Planning Board.

Contacts:

[Alexis Boutin](#), Secretary

Phone:

413-662-3000 x3231

Mailing Address:

North Adams Planning Board
 City of North Adams
 10 Main Street
 North Adams, MA 01247

Meetings:

2nd Monday of each month but can be changed to 1st or 3rd Mondays due to holiday schedules
 City Council Chambers - 1st flr.,
 Room 106 City Hall

Agendas and Minutes:

Agendas and Minutes are posted with [Meeting Materials](#), otherwise, they are available by contacting [Alexis Boutin](#).

[Zoning Map](#): Color-based map showing every Zoning District in the City.

[Use Regulation Schedule](#): Explains every Zoning District in the City and what uses are permitted as-of-right or by special permit.

[Dimensional Regulation Schedule](#): Explains required lot areas, building setbacks, lot coverage, and building heights in every Zoning District.

Sample Permits and Fees:

Permit	Fee
Form A: Application for Endorsement of Plan Believed Not to Require Approval – For Subdivisions Only	\$75
Special Permit Application and Checklist	\$125
Special Permit Application to Establish a Permitted Use in The Windsor Lake Watershed District	\$125

Zoning Board of Appeals

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Zoning Board of Appeals is responsible for interpreting the North Adams Zoning Ordinance in appeals of denied building permits or other determinations of the Director of Inspection Services, and for hearing petitions for special permits and variances subject to the requirements M.G.L.C. 40A.

The Zoning Board of Appeals consists of five members and two associate members appointed by the mayor, and two associate members appointed by the Mayor. Members and associate members of the Zoning Board of Appeals serve five-year terms and require reappointment by the Mayor. Vacancies occurring on the Board may be filled in the same manner, but only for the balance of an unexpired term. Associate members of the Zoning Board of Appeals serve as members of the Board when regular members of the Board are excused from serving by reason of personal interest, illness, absence, or inability to act.

Permitting Process:

The Inspector of Buildings enforces the State building code, regulations of the Architectural Access Board, and Zoning Bylaw, and issues building permits. If a business is required to obtain a variance from the dimensional controls or a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Building Inspector will inform the owner of that and provide the information needed to begin that process.

Special Permit: When a project is determined in the Zoning Ordinance to have complex effects on existing land use, or the district in which the project is planned is determined to be sensitive to certain type of development or activity, a special permit is necessary; please refer to Accepted activities within the Zoning Districts Matrix. Either the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals executes the special permit process.

Contact:

[Alexis Boutin](#), Secretary

Phone:

413-662-3000 x3231

Mailing Address:

Zoning Board of Appeals
City of North Adams
10 Main Street
North Adams, MA 01247

Meetings:

3rd Monday of each month unless otherwise noted. Holidays may cause meetings to be held instead on the 2nd Monday of each month. For questions about meeting times, email zoningboard@northadams-ma.gov.
City Council Chambers - 1st flr., Room 106
City Hall

Agendas and Minutes:

Agendas and Minutes are posted with [Meeting Materials](#), otherwise, they are available by contacting [Alexis Boutin](#).

Sample Permits and Fees

Permit	Fee
Home-Occupation Special Permit	\$125
Special Permit Application and Checklist	\$125
Variance Application	\$125

Inspection Services

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Inspector of Buildings enforces the State building code, the regulations of the Architectural Access Board, the Zoning Bylaw, and issues building permits.

Permitting Process:

A Building Permit is the last permit owners need before beginning construction. All other permits need to be in place prior to issuance of a Building Permit. If a business owner is required to obtain a variance from the dimensional controls or a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Building Inspector will inform the owner of that and provide all the information needed to begin the process. [See all Massachusetts State Building Codes.](#)

Contacts:

Building Inspector/Zoning Officer:
[William Meranti](#)

Plumbing and Gas Inspector:
[Michael Lahey](#)

Meeting Location:

City Hall, Room 100, 1st flr.

Phone:

413-662-3000 x3020

Inspector of Buildings / Zoning Enforcement
Officer: 413-662-3014

Mailing Address:

Inspection Services
City of North Adams
10 Main Street
North Adams, MA 01247

Hours:

Monday-Friday 8:00 am-4:30 pm

Summer Hours:

Monday-Thursday 8:00 am-4:30 pm
Friday 8:00 am-1:00 pm

Sample Permits and Fees:

Permit	Fee
Building Permit to Construct, Repair, Renovate or Demolish a Building Other than a One- or Two-Family Dwelling	Variable based on work proposed
Initial Construction Control	\$0
Final Construction Control	\$0
Shed Permit	Sheds under 200 sf. @ 15.00/sf.
Sign Permit	\$1.25/100 sf. up to \$100, an additional \$2.25/sf. for anything over. Minimum charge \$25

Board of Health & Health Department

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Board of Health is responsible for protecting, promoting, and preserving the health and well-being of all residents of the City of North Adams. Consistent with Massachusetts General Laws, State and local regulations, and local ordinances, the Board of Health is responsible for disease prevention and control; health and environmental protection; and promoting a healthy community. The Board of Health serves as the local extension of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. The Health Department enforces State and local health sanitation and environmental codes.

The Board of Health consists of three members appointed by the Mayor. Members of the Board of Health serve three-year terms and require reappointment by the Mayor. Vacancies occurring on the Board may be filled in the same manner, but only for the balance of an unexpired term.

Permitting Process:

Businesses need to fill out online permits and then meet with the Board of Health if a business or project will serve food. Separately, the Board of Health issues certificates of occupancy for all residences and enforces Title V requirements.

Contact:

Heather DeMarsico,
Health Director

Marc Bryant
Code Enforcement

Breanna Whitman, Secretary

Phone:

413-662-3000 x3020 or x3021

Phone – Emergency:

Department of Public Health Epidemiological
Hotline – Emerging & Potentially Emerging
Infectious Diseases: 617-983-6800

Diseases Reportable to Local Board Of
Health: 413-662-3020

Berkshire Health Systems COVID-19 Hotline:
855-262-5465

Mailing Address:

Board of Health or Health Department
City of North Adams
10 Main Street
North Adams, MA 01247

Meeting Location: City Hall, Room 100

Meetings:

3rd Wednesday of each month
Room 202 - 2nd flr. City Hall

Agendas and Minutes:

When available, Agendas and Minutes are posted with [Meeting Materials](#), otherwise, they are available by contacting the [Health Department](#).

Sample Permits and Fees

Permit	Fee
Body Art Apprentice / Body Art Technician / Body Art Establishment	\$0 Apprentice / \$150 per technician / \$150 per establishment
Camp License	\$50 per session
Food Establishment Bakery/Frozen Dessert Food Svc. 0-30 Seats Food Svc. 31+ Residential Kitchen Retail food – 0-49 ft ² Retail food – 50-99 ft ² Retail food – 100+ ft ² Catering – Seasonal + Food Truck/Temp Mobile	\$50-\$500 based on type of estab. / size / # of seats. <i>The same permit can be used for all food businesses</i>
Temporary Food Event	\$50 per day / \$100 multiple per yr.

Board of Assessors

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Assessor's Office holds the records of each parcel in the city, which includes the building dimension, assessed value taxes on the property, ownership (the deed, mortgage, and liens,) information on utilities and information on any easements. Some of the Assessor's Office extensive database of property information is available online, while more in-depth information is available to the public by contacting the Assessor's Office directly. The Assessor's Office can provide information (e.g., a field card) about a parcel that may be necessary to complete documents for other boards. The Board of Assessors also receives permits from Inspection Services and forms required by the State:

The Board of Assessors consists of three members appointed by the Mayor. Members of the Board of Assessors serve three-year terms and require reappointment by the Mayor and confirmation by the City Council. Vacancies on the Board may be filled in the same manner, but only for the balance of an unexpired term.

Under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapters 58 to 65C, the Board of Assessors fall under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Commissioner of Revenue, who may revise rules, regulations, and guidelines, as deemed necessary, to establish minimum standards of assessment performance. Before assessment values, new growth, and tax rates are set that must be certified by the Department of Revenue on an annual basis. Every five years, the Department of Revenue sends an audit team to the City to evaluate the methods used by the Board of Assessors for the City to be certified for revaluation. While the Board of Assessors regularly verifies and updates property data, the Massachusetts Department of Revenue certification guidelines require that all properties be inspected at least once every 10 years.

City of North Adams:
[Property Assessment Database](#)

[City of North Adams: Assessor GIS Map](#)

Contact:

[Jessica Lincourt](#), Chairperson

Phone:

413-662-3000 x3012

Mailing Address:

Board of Assessors
10 Main Street
North Adams, MA 01247

Meetings:

Meetings one Wednesday each month
Room 102 – 1st flr. City Hall

Agendas and Minutes:

When available, Agendas and Minutes are posted with [Meeting Materials](#), otherwise, they are available by contacting the [Assessor's Office](#).

Sample Permits and Fees:

Permit	Fee
Application for Abatement of Real/Personal property Tax	\$0
Form of List - State Tax Form 2 : Personal Property Subject to Taxation	\$0
Form of List - State Tax Form 2MT : Mobile Telecommunications: Personal Property Subject to Taxation Required By All Mobile Telecommunications Providers	\$0
Motor Vehicle Excise Tax Abatement	\$0

The application for abatement of real/personal property tax can only be filed during the period beginning January 1 through the end of business day on February 1 each year. If February 1 falls on a weekend, abatement applications are due by end of day on the following business day.

Public Works

Roles and Responsibilities:

Public Services is responsible for all streets, highways, water systems and facilities, sewer systems and facilities, cemeteries, parks and recreation facilities, operations, maintenance, and repairs and maintenance and repairs for the Historic Valley Campground.

Public Services - City Yard:

The City Yard is responsible for maintenance and upkeep of the city's infrastructure. If a project needs water, sewer, and/or City-provided utilities, you will need to meet with a staff member of Public Services. City provided services have various installation fees ranging from \$40 to a few hundred dollars.

Permitting Process:

Road opening permits are required when digging in public roads is required. Fees vary based on

the size of the opening.

Contacts:

Commissioner of Public Services:

[Timothy Lescarbeau](#)

[Pamela White](#)

Phone:

413-662-3000 x3047

Mailing Address:

Public Services
59 Hodges Cross Road
North Adams, MA 01247

Power Outages:

[Click here to check the status of Power Outages](#)
or call 1-800-322-3223

Sample Permits and Fees:

Water and Sewer

Roles and Responsibilities:

Public Services is responsible for the city's water and sewer systems, including a water filtration plant, two water pump stations, three sewer pump stations, one back-up well and two surface water reservoirs. Our mission is to provide safe and clean drinking water and remove wastewater in as sanitary a manner as possible.

Permitting Process:

If a project connects to the municipal sewer system, the business owner will need a permit to tie into the system. The City Engineer will explain what is required of a project to be allowed to hook up and the Public Service Department will issue the permit.

Contacts:

Water Foreman:

[Colin Todd](#)

Sewer Foreman:

[Paul Markland](#)

Secretary:

[Pamela White](#)

Phone – Office:

413-662-3000 x3047

Phone - Water and Sewer:

413-662-3157

Mailing Address:

Public Services - Water and Sewer
59 Hodges Cross Road
North Adams, MA 01247

Hours:

Monday–Friday 8:00 am-4:00 pm

Summer Hours:

Monday–Thursday 8:00 am-4:00 pm

Friday 8:00 am-1:00 pm

Sample Permits and Fees:

Permit	Fee
Sewer Entrance / Sewer Connection – New	\$300 + \$175 for Road Opening
Sewer Connection - Existing	\$175
Curb Cut	\$175
Road Opening	\$175
New Service of Water	\$100

Conservation Commission

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Conservation Commission is responsible for promoting and developing natural resources and protects the City's watershed. The Commission conducts studies into local land areas and reviews all proposed and ongoing municipal, private, commercial, and industrial projects, including conducting site inspections to determine if they comply with local, State, and Federal wetland laws. The Conservation Commission enforces the Wetlands Protection Act.

The Conservation Commission consists of seven members appointed by the Mayor. Members of the Conservation Commission serve three-year terms and require reappointment by the Mayor. Vacancies occurring on the Commission may be filled in the same manner, but only for the balance of an unexpired term.

Permitting Process:

The Administrative Officer is the agent of the Conservation and can advise if a project is under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission and what, if any, permits must be obtained. This is a step that is often overlooked and can create complications later for business owners.

Work in or within 100' of a wetland and/or 200' of a perennial stream requires review by the Conservation Commission under the Wetlands Protection Act and the River Act. Some activities are prohibited, and some work requires a setback from the wetlands.

If a project is approved, the Conservation Commission will issue an Order of Conditions, allowing the project to proceed.

Contact:

[Alexis Boutin](#), Secretary

Phone:

413-662-3000 x3231

Mailing Address:

Conservation Commission
10 Main Street
North Adams, MA 01247

When submitting a Notice of Intent or other documents, please consider being environmentally friendly and only submit paper copies with no plastic bindings or plastic inserts.

Meetings:

Meeting as needed
Room 202 – 2nd fl. or
City Council Chambers - 1st fl.,
Room 106 City Hall

Agenda and Minutes:

Agendas and Minutes are posted with [Meeting Materials](#), otherwise, they are available by contacting [Alexis Boutin](#) or emailing conservationcommission@northadams-ma.gov.

Sample Permits and Fees:

Permit	Fee
<i>*Forms typically filed through Mass DEP</i>	
WPA Form 1 – Request for Determination of Applicability	\$125
WPA Form 5 – Order of Conditions – File with Mass DEP	Fee determined by Mass DEP

Police Department

Roles and Responsibilities:

The North Adams Police Department is responsible for;

- Preventing crime
- Providing emergency response
- Providing support services
- Protecting life and property through the enforcement of laws and regulations
- Responding to calls for police service
- Conducting preliminary and follow up criminal and traffic investigations
- Conducting interviews
- Taking an active role in Community Oriented Policing

Permitting Process:

Applications for Peddler's Permits are submitted through the State. Completed Outside Vendor Detail for New Vendor applications can be emailed to sabuisi@northadams-ma.gov; faxed to 413-662-3008; or mailed to Department of Public Safety, 40 American Legion Dr., North Adams, MA. 01247.

Contact:

Police Chief: [Mark Bailey](#)

Phone - Non-Emergency:
413-664-4944

Phone - Emergency: 911

Mailing Address:

Police Department
11 Summer Street
North Adams, MA 01247

Firearm Application Hours:

Monday-Friday 10:00 am-3:00 pm

Sample Permits and Fees:

Permit	Fee
Application for Peddler's Permit	\$62
Request for Outside Detail: New Vendor	\$20 per hour for cruiser rental; \$54/hr., Mon-Fri 7 am-6 pm / \$81/hr. 6 pm-7 am, all days incl. weekends
License to Carry Firearms	\$25 to \$100 depending on applicant.

Fire Department

Roles and Responsibilities:

The North Adams Fire Department is responsible for fire prevention and safety for the City of North Adams, responding to all emergencies as requested, and upholding and enforcing the Massachusetts State Fire Code.

Permitting Process:

The Fire Prevention Bureau is responsible for the issuing and inspection of all Fire Code related permits in the city.

Contacts:

Fire Chief:

[Brent Lefebvre](#)

SAFE Fire Prevention

Educator John Marlowe

Phone - Non-Emergency: 413-664-4922

Phone - Emergency: 911

Mailing Address:

Fire Department
40 American Legion Drive
North Adams, MA 01247

Sample Permits and Fees:

Permit	Fee
Application for Standard Permit – Form FP006	\$10.00
Certificate of Compliance – Smoke Detectors / Carbon Monoxide Alarm	\$10.00
Installation or Alteration of Fuel Oil Burning Equipment	\$5.00
Vendor Permit for use of propane cooking equipment	\$10.00

Appendices

- A.** *Most Requested Permits*
- B.** *Typical Permitting Timeframe*
- C.** *Typical Permit-Related Penalties*
- D.** *Resources for Businesses*

Appendix A. – Most Common Permits

The following are the most required permits and approvals issued by permit granting authorities in North Adams. These are only the most common permits; other permits and approvals may be necessary depending on the project.

GENERAL ZONING: The North Adams Zoning Ordinance sets requirements for each of the 16 zoning districts in the City, regulating lot size and coverage, frontage, setbacks, parking and building height. The Board of Appeals makes its decision based on neighborhood continuity, adherence to the goals and objectives of the Master Plan and other site-specific issues. The Board of Appeals also grants Special Permits for work within the Floodplain District. If a change in the Zoning Ordinance is required, the Planning Board needs to conduct a public hearing, followed by approval of two-thirds of the members of the City Council and review by the Attorney General's Office.

SPECIAL PERMIT: When a project is determined in the Zoning Ordinance to have complex effects on the existing land use, or the district in which the project is planned is determined to be sensitive to certain type of development or activity, a special permit is necessary. Refer to the accepted activities within the Zoning Districts matrix for guidance. Either the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals executes the special permit process.

SITE PLAN APPROVAL: The Planning Board reviews commercial and industrial projects under the Site Plan Approval process. The Site Plan Approval process also deals with Special Permits for new construction, additions, change in-use, and signage requirements. The proposal is reviewed by various City departments to evaluate the design and impacts of the proposal on traffic, drainage, parking, etc. Large projects should request section 3D "Site Plan Approval" of the City's Zoning Ordinance for details and requirements.

SUBDIVISION APPROVAL: A project which involves the construction of a subdivision road (a new road) needs to go through the Planning Board's Subdivision Approval process. This generally involves a preliminary and definitive approval stage. If the project does not propose a new street and has the required frontage on an existing public way, a Form A, Subdivision Control Law Approval Not Required, is all that is required from the Planning Board.

ORDER OF CONDITIONS: Work in or within 100' of a wetland and/or 200' of a perennial stream requires review by the Conservation Commission under the Wetlands Protection Act and the River Act. Some activities are prohibited, and some work requires a setback from the wetlands. If a project is approved, the Conservation Commission will issue an Order of Conditions, allowing the project to proceed.

STREET OPENING PERMIT: When work is proposed involving excavation within a city-owned public way, a permit must be obtained from the City Yard in Public Services. Business owners need a Street Opening Permit for such things as installation of water or sewer lines or other utilities within a public way which would require excavating in the road.

SEWER CONNECTION PERMIT: If a project connects to the municipal sewer system, the business owner will need a permit to tie into the system. The City Engineer will explain what is required to be allowed to hook up. The Public Service Department will issue the permit.

STATE AND FEDERAL PERMITS: Depending on the size and nature of a project, some state and federal permits may be required. City staff in various departments can provide some help, but it is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary permits.

BUILDING PERMIT: As noted under Inspection Services, the Building Permit is the last permit business owners need before beginning construction. All other permits need to be in place prior to issuance of a Building Permit.

Appendix B. – Typical Permitting Timeframe

After design work is complete, a business undertaking new construction is ready to apply for permits. Many applicants enlist the help of a professional engineering firm and/or legal advice, which is highly recommended. Outside design, engineering, and/or architectural professionals can ensure everything is complete to help avoid delays. Times vary depending on the project. The following is a general guide indicating the approximate length of time to obtain permits -- from the date the application is received until the date the permit is issued:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| • Building Permit | Up to 1 month |
| • Special Permit | 2-3 months |
| • Variance (Zoning) | 2-3 months |
| • Order of Conditions | 2 months |
| • Subdivision Approval | 4-6 months |
| • Site Plan Approval | 2-4 months |
| • Zoning Ordinance Change | 6 months |

Appendix C. – Typical Permitting Penalties

The City of North Adams enforces the below and required permits through cease-and-desist orders, a non-criminal disposition ticket, and, ultimately, the court system. Once a violation has been identified, the project is stopped and a fine is issued. The cost for a violation may range from a written warning to thousands of dollars. It is therefore important to consider all phases of a project when applying for appropriate permits. Chapter 29 of the City Ordinances details all non-criminal disposition fines. Each day a violation occurs is considered a subsequent offense, allowing the maximum penalty to be reassessed.

Listed below are typical permit-related penalties:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Building Permit | \$50 to \$100 |
| • Special Permit | Written warning to \$100 |
| • Variance (Zoning) | Written warning to \$100 |
| • Subdivision Approval | Written warning to \$100 |
| • Site Plan Approval | Written warning to \$100 |
| • Zoning Ordinance Change | Written warning to \$100 |
| • Licenses | \$50 to \$100 |
| • Street Opening | \$100 to \$200 |
| • Sewer Connection | \$300 |

Appendix D. – Federal & State Permits

The following list was adapted from the North Andover Development Guidebook. The list is not exhaustive thus, if questions arise, business owners should seek legal counsel. Most small development projects will not need federal or state permits or approvals, but as projects increase in size and complexity, applicants should educate themselves about those below that may be required or have applicability to their business plans.

Federal Permits/Approvals

1. **National Environmental Policy Act, or "NEPA"** requires the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) to assess the impact of a major federal action, i.e., projects and programs entirely or partly financed, assisted, conducted, regulated, or approved by federal agencies that may have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Major federal actions are either defined by statute or determined by agency officials.
2. **Clean Water Act, Section 404 Permit** requires a project involving the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States (including federally defined wetlands) to obtain a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers. The permit may be a programmatic general permit, an individual permit, or an official letter of permission.
3. **Clean Water Act, Water Quality Certification Approval** requires the state to determine whether certain activities meet state water quality standards; if they don't, the Corps of Engineers is prohibited from issuing a Section 404 permit for the activity.
4. **Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, Section 10 Permit** requires a federal permit from the Army Corps of Engineers for dredging, filling, or obstruction of navigable waters; the Section 10 permit is often applied for in conjunction with a Section 404 permit.
5. **National Flood Insurance Act and Flood Disaster Protection Act Certification** requires that banks not make, extend, or review any loan secured by improved real estate located in an area having flood hazards, and in which flood insurance is available, unless the building securing the loan is covered by flood insurance. This usually requires architectural or engineering review and certification of building plans to the lender.
6. **Clean Air Act Permits or Approvals** may be required directly from the Environmental Protection Agency for certain emissions and hazardous air pollutants from new sources of these regulated air pollutants; most of the federal requirements, however, are incorporated by Massachusetts in its State Implementation Plan, or SIP (see State Clean Air Act).
7. **National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Review** requires that certain federally assisted, permitted, and licensed activities that might have an adverse effect on properties listed with, or eligible for listing with, the National Register of Historic Places be reviewed concerning that effect and its consequences; Section 106 review is accomplished by submitting a Project Notification Form to the Historical Commission.

8. **Environmental Protection Agency Stormwater Notices of Intent and/or NPDES Permits** are required for stormwater discharges associated with certain industrial activities. Industrial activity was recently redefined to include "construction activity including clearing, grading, and excavation activities except operations that result in the disturbance of less than five acres of total land area which are not part of a larger common plan of development or sale". The project owner and operator are required to file a Notice of Intent and pollution abatement plan with the Environmental Protection Agency.

State Permits/Approvals

1. **Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, or 'MEPA'** requires state agencies to evaluate the environmental impact of all projects or activities undertaken by state agencies, and of private projects seeking state funding or permits. An Environmental Notification Form must be filed if the project meets one or more of the thresholds specified in the regulations, whereas certain activities automatically require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report.
2. **Massachusetts Clean Waters Act, Sewer Extension/Connection Permits** are required for the connection of a project to a sewer system unless exempted. There are pretreatment requirements for industrial users, which must be coordinated with the permitting requirements of the Marlborough Westerly Wastewater Treatment Plant.
3. **Massachusetts Clean Waters Act, Surface Water and/or Groundwater Discharge Permits:** Surface Water Discharge Permits, administered jointly by the federal Environmental Protection Agency and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, are required for point source discharges to U.S. Waters and application should be made simultaneously to both agencies. A permit may also be required for stormwater discharges where runoff is substantially contaminated or if contamination exists because the discharge is located within an industrial area or is associated with industrial activity. If the project is in an unsewered area, a Disposal Works Construction Permit must be obtained from the local board of Health in accordance with Title 5 of the State Environmental Code. If a sewage disposal system with capacity in excess of 15,000 gallons per day will be constructed, a groundwater discharge permit must be obtained.
4. **Waterways, Great Ponds, and Tidelands Construction License** must be obtained from the Department of Environmental Protection, Wetlands and Waterways Division, for any construction below the high-water line of state waterways, great ponds (ponds over 10 acres in their natural state) and tidelands.
5. **Massachusetts Clean Air Act Approval** must be obtained in writing from the Department of Environmental Protection for the plans, specifications, and proposed operating procedures for the construction, substantial reconstruction, or alteration of any stationary source of air pollution, unless specifically exempted. Stationary sources emitting certain pollutant levels must register with DEP as well. Anyone constructing or demolishing a commercial building, or residential building with 20 or more units, must notify DEP at least 10 working days prior to starting work, if it will create emissions that cause or contribute to a condition of air pollution.
6. **Massachusetts Endangered Species Act** prohibits taking or possession of any plant or animal species listed in the federal Endangered Species Act, or the alteration of a significant habitat.

7. A project developer should review the list of endangered species available from the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, and habitat maps available for inspection at Town Hall from the Conservation Commission.
8. **Hazardous Waste Management Permits** may be required from the federal Environmental Protection Agency or state Department of Environmental Protection if any wastes generated by the project are hazardous, depending on the types of quantities generated; contact the Adams Fire Department for information.
9. **Massachusetts Historical Commission Approval** must be obtained if a designated historical or archeological landmark will be altered or affected by a project undertaken by a state agency or any private party seeking any state funding, permits or licenses for the project.
10. **State Highway Access Permit** must be obtained in writing from the Massachusetts Highway Department if a project will involve the creation, alteration, expansion, or substantial impact upon an opening onto a state highway. This includes property which has access directly onto state highways and property which abuts a state highway layout.

Appendix E. – Resources for Businesses

The list below connects North Adams’ businesses with regional, State, and national resources -- from entrepreneurship competitions to small business loans -- that support sustainable growth. The list is not exhaustive but should set businesses on the right path toward success.

1Berkshire – 1Berkshire is a county-wide organization focused on economic development and promotion of the region as a preferred place to visit, live, and grow a business. 1Berkshire provides programs that connect businesses with one another and potential customers and works to develop future leaders and support entrepreneurs.

Berkshire Black Economic Council – The Berkshire Black Economic Council is a newly formed 501(c)3 nonprofit that aims to activate the following areas to improve Berkshire County’s Black business community: growth and sustainability; business education and mentorship; economic justice; marketing and media; and funding and investment.

Blackshires – Blackshires is a community-owned platform of media, education, and events for Berkshire County’s BIPOC community. The organization highlights the people, organizations, and products who inspire and serve the BIPOC community.

Common Capital – Common Capital is a nonprofit, community development financial institution (CDFI) working to strengthen communities by creating economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income people, women, people of color, and immigrants. Common Capital responsibly lends money to small businesses unable to access the capital they need from conventional sources, such as banks. Common Capital augments the money it lends with free business assistance that supports their borrowers’ growth and success.

EforAll Berkshire County – Entrepreneurship for All (EforAll) is accelerating economic and social impact in communities through inclusive entrepreneurship. Sample programs include The Accelerator: a free, one-year program offered twice a year that provides immersive business training, mentorship, and access to an extended professional network. Anyone with a dream to start or grow a business is encouraged to apply; and Pitch Contests, fast-paced, fun community events that enable early-stage entrepreneurs to gain valuable exposure and feedback on a business idea at no cost. Pitch Contests offer a fantastic opportunity to network and validate business ideas with the potential to win a cash prize from EforAll.

Find My Legislator – Find your legislator by entering your street address, city or town, and zip code. Please note that people can only search addresses within Massachusetts and that not entering a complete street address, city or town, and zip code may result in an inaccurate response.

Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses – 10,000 Small Businesses is available to business owners across the United States. For over a decade, Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses has helped thousands of entrepreneurs grow their businesses and create jobs in their communities. Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses is an investment to help small businesses grow and create jobs by providing them with greater access to education, capital, and business support services. To date, more than 12,800 business owners have graduated from the program across all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. Through the program, business owners gain practical skills across topics such as financial statements, negotiation, marketing, and employee management and the tools to develop a customized business plan for growth—for free.

Greylock Federal Credit Union – Berkshire County’s certified Community Development Financing Institution lender offers business loans, lending for investment properties, and support for businesses that have received Paycheck Protection Program.

Hello Alice - Hello Alice is a free platform designed for and by small business owners. They are here to guide and support businesses at every turn on their adventures in entrepreneurship. Hello Alice works on behalf of over one million small business owners to secure relevant business solutions and funding opportunities for owners and their businesses.

Latinas413 – Latinas413 ignites the collective power of Latinas to expand their social and economic capital, serving as a bridge to resources available in Berkshire County and increasing the representation of the voices, talents, and interests of the region’s Latinas. Latinas413 are all about integration and representation within the fabric of Berkshire County.

Lever, Inc. – Lever’s mission is to build and grow innovation-driven enterprises; attract revenues to the region and create jobs; and expand our ecosystem for entrepreneurs, innovators, and young people. Lever’s vision is a robust and diversified regional economy that offers high quality of life for all. Lever offers non-dilutive Innovation Grants to early-stage companies through challenge programs. Challenges focus on business verticals such as advanced manufacturing, health technology, or on "need areas" such as innovations in caregiving. Lever selects finalists, readies them for a pitch competition, then supports the winning team in an incubation phase and beyond.

Local Initiatives Support Corporation: Small Business Support - LISC focuses on bolstering entrepreneurs whose lack of access to capital and services reflects deep, longstanding structural inequities—businesses owned and operated by people of color, women, immigrants, and veterans, and those located in low-wealth, underserved places. They do this by providing direct grants and loans to business owners, and by supporting “high-touch,” culturally competent local business development organizations that can help entrepreneurs access capital, upgrade marketing and accounting systems, troubleshoot problems, or find affordable commercial space.

MassHire Berkshires Career Center - The MassHire Berkshire Career Center is a partnership between Berkshire Training & Employment Program and the Massachusetts Division of Career Services, chartered by the MassHire Berkshire Workforce Board. Together, we are committed to providing quality programs and services to businesses, job seekers, and our community partners. We serve all 32 cities and towns in Berkshire County. Whether you’re looking for your first job, a new career, career advancement, or quality employees, MassHire Berkshire Career Center is here to assist you. MassHire Programs & Services are funded in full by US Department of Labor (USDOL) Employment and Training Administration grants. (Additional details furnished upon request.)

MassDevelopment - Lenders. Developers. Job creators. At MassDevelopment, we offer financing and real estate solutions to support companies and nonprofits, increase housing, eliminate blight, and drive economic growth across Massachusetts. MassDevelopment’s bond financing programs offer a cost-effective way for companies to finance capital projects, new equipment purchases, and facility expansions. We also provide loans and guarantees to help grow your operations, and development assistance for early-stage projects.

Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development – Massachusetts is an attractive and competitive home for a diverse set of industries. By focusing on competitiveness and offering dedicated supports for small businesses, the Commonwealth seeks to enable robust economic growth across communities, businesses, and sectors. Visit this website to find grants and programs supporting business and business innovation with links to other resources.

Massachusetts Grow Capital Corporation - The purpose of MGCC is to create and preserve jobs at small businesses, inclusive of those owned by women, minorities, immigrants, and veterans. MGCC also works to promote economic development throughout the Commonwealth, with special paid attention to business needs in underserved areas, Gateway Cities and low to moderate income communities.

Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network - The Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network is committed to helping the Commonwealth's businesses succeed. They provide free, confidential, 1:1 business assistance and free or low-cost educational training to prospective and existing small businesses in Berkshire County. Areas of assistance include, but are not limited to, business plan development, pre-venture feasibility, cash flow analysis, personnel, and organizational issues, conventional and non-conventional financing, and marketing.

Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) - The Supplier Diversity Office certifies companies as Massachusetts Minority Business Enterprises (MBE), Women Business Enterprises (WBE), Veteran Business Enterprises (VBE), and Portuguese Business Enterprises (PBE). Companies with a principal place of business in Massachusetts interested in obtaining certification from the Supplier Diversity Office are required to attend a mandatory, two-hour pre-certification workshop prior to applying.

Start Small, Think Big - is a nonprofit that helps small businesses with high potential and limited access to the resources needed to create thriving businesses.

Verizon Small Business Training - Digital Ready is Verizon's online curriculum designed to give small businesses the personalized tools they need to succeed in today's digital world. Learning modules, expert coaching, peer networking, access grant opportunities throughout the year and more are all here. It's part of Verizon's goal to provide resources to help one million small businesses thrive in the digital economy.