



Office of Zoning Administration

Stephanie A. Miner, Mayor

Guide to Required Documents for Zoning Applications – Special Permit

The following contains additional information about the documents required for Special Permit applications. Please contact the [Zoning Office](#) with any questions.

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Application – Available on the City’s website:

<http://www.syracuse.ny.us/ApprovedForms/Approved/Special%20Permit.pdf>

Property Survey – A survey is a legal description of a property, drawn to scale by a licensed surveyor. It is usually provided to the property owner when the property is purchased. If no structures (garage, addition, deck, fence, ramp, pool, etc) have been added to the property since the property was purchased, the survey obtained at purchase can be submitted. If there have been any such structural additions, the property owner must contract a licensed surveyor for a current survey. A licensed surveyor will provide a survey with a current “title block” showing the surveyor’s name, address, license number and stamp, the date of the survey and the scale that was used.

It is critical that the survey not be enlarged or reduced (slight reductions can occur when the document is scanned or faxed). The Zoning Office relies on the scale used in the survey to perform calculations to determine if the dimensions of existing and proposed structures conform to zoning regulations. Please submit ONE clean, clear full size copy. If the full size copy is larger than 11”x17”, you must also submit ONE copy that is no is larger than 11”x17”. The Zoning Office will use the full size version for scale purposes, and the smaller size to photocopy.

Please contact the [Zoning Office](#) if you have any questions about whether a copy of your existing property survey can be submitted, or if you did not receive a survey when the property was purchased.

Site Plan – A site plan is a scaled drawing that provides an overhead perspective of a property, similar to a property survey. However, a site plan also shows existing and proposed buildings, parking areas, driveways, sidewalks, landscaping and other features.

Your site plan must include: a) Location of existing or proposed building; b) Location and dimensioned parking areas including type of parking surface, curb cuts and all driveways; c) Location and dimensioned areas of landscaping indicating type, height, and number of plantings; d) Location of dumpsters and/or trash receptacles indicating type of screening to be installed; e) Proposed overall site screening and landscaping; f) Location, type, and height of fencing; g) Location of lighting, including height of structures, and wattage of luminaries; h) Location of loading dock/areas; i) Location and dimensioned areas to be used by delivery vehicles; j) Location of all ground signage.

It is critical that the survey not be enlarged or reduced (reductions can occur when the document is scanned or faxed). The Zoning Office relies on the scale used in the survey to perform calculations to determine if the dimensions of existing and proposed structures conform to zoning regulations. Please submit ONE clean, clear full size copy. If the full size copy is larger than 11”x17”, you must also submit ONE copy that is no is larger than 11”x17”. The Zoning Office will use the full size version for scale purposes, and the smaller size to photocopy.

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Not every Zoning Application requires a site plan. If your project involves ONLY changes to the surfaces of an existing structure (e.g., adding windows, changing siding, widening an entrance, etc.), a site plan would not apply. Please contact the [Zoning Office](#) if you have any questions or if you think a site plan may not be required for your project.

Floor Plan – A floor plan is an illustration, drawn to scale, showing the outline of a floor, interior walls, doors, windows, and other interior elements. Each floor of a building has its own floor plan. Floor plans must include dimensions of all rooms and permanent features. Residential floor plans must show and label all bedrooms, living room(s), kitchen, dining room, bathrooms, hallways and closets. Commercial floor plans must show, label, and provide dimensions for all of the following that apply: customer areas, employee areas, storage areas, restrooms, office space, tables/chairs, counters/booths, stages/dance floors/DJ booths, shelving/display areas, all kitchen equipment, coolers/freezers/etc., vending machines/amusement games/etc.

It is critical that the floor plan(s) not be enlarged or reduced (reductions can occur when the document is scanned or faxed). The Zoning Office relies on the scale used in the drawings to perform calculations to determine if the dimensions of existing and proposed structures conform to zoning regulations. Please submit ONE clean, clear full size copy. If the full size copy is larger than 11"x17", you must also submit ONE copy that is no is larger than 11"x17". The Zoning Office will use the full size version for scale purposes, and the smaller size to photocopy.

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Exterior Elevation – An elevation is a scaled drawing of a view of a building seen from one side, a flat representation of one façade or wall. This is the most common view used to describe the external appearance of a building. Each elevation is labeled in relation to the compass direction it faces, e.g. the north elevation of a building is the side that most closely faces north. Architects also use the word elevation as a synonym for façade, so the north elevation is the north wall of the building.

Elevation drawings must be drawn to scale, must provide dimensions for all exterior elements (doors, windows, etc), and must be labeled with the location of all building materials and colors. You can use arrows to point out where on the drawing each material will be.

It is critical that elevation drawings are not enlarged or reduced (reductions can occur when the document is scanned or faxed). The Zoning Office relies on the scale used in the drawings to perform calculations to determine if the dimensions of existing and proposed structures conform to zoning regulations. Please submit ONE clean, clear full size copy. If the full size copy is larger than 11"x17", you must also submit ONE copy that is no is larger than 11"x17". The Zoning Office will use the full size version for scale purposes, and the smaller size to photocopy.

Not every Zoning Application requires elevation drawings. If your project ONLY involves changes to the site and not the building(s) on a property (e.g., creating a new driveway or a walkway) elevation drawings would not apply. Please contact the [Zoning Office](#) if you have any questions or if you think elevation drawings may not be required for your project.

SEQR Short Form – Governmental agencies in NYS must determine the environmental impact of all proposed development projects. The applicant or developer completes Part I (the first page) of the SEQR application (Short Environmental Assessment Form – http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/permits_ej_operations_pdf/shorteaf.pdf), and the Lead Agency completes the rest. For "Type I" actions, the Zoning Office will advise that the SEQR Long Form must be completed.

Product Specifications – For the purposes of obtaining Zoning approval and a building permit, product "specs" are detailed written, exact statements describing materials, dimensions and construction provided by the product manufacturer. The Zoning Office uses product specs to evaluate the exact appearance and materials used in the construction of doors, windows, awnings, light fixtures and any other pre-manufactured items that will be used in construction. The Permit Office uses product specs to determine if the products meet quality and safety criteria in the state and local building codes.

Product spec sheets or brochures can be downloaded from manufacturers' websites, or obtained directly from retailers and local manufacturers.

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Building Materials & Colors – Building materials are the “parts” used in the construction of buildings and other structures. Just as product specs provide specific details about the pre-constructed elements used in construction, manufacturer’s reference or catalogue information on building materials provides details about what will be built on site. The Zoning Office and applicable review boards are usually concerned with exterior building materials and their colors, such as roofing, paint or stain, brick/stone/pavers, stucco, etc.

Manufacturers and retailers provide brochures and product sheets showing color photos of their offerings. Please provide 3 sets of material & color references. Elevation drawings must indicate where each of the materials will be used; notes with arrows are a good way to illustrate this.

Photographs – Existing Structure – Photographs of the existing structure and project site show what the property looks like before the proposed improvements are made, and provide a visual context for reviewing the proposed improvements. Photographs should be taken from all vantage points and should be labeled to correspond with other drawings submitted. For example, the photograph and the elevation drawing for the north side of a building should each be labeled “north façade.” Photographs of the existing structure or site can also be used to create a sign drawing / sign plan (see **Signage Drawings / Sign Plan** below). Photographs should be in color and can be printed on plain paper.

Photographs – Streetscape – “Streetscape” photos are photos of the properties surrounding the subject property, and are required so the proposed improvements can be evaluated in the context of the surrounding properties. Color photographs should be submitted of properties on each side and across the street from the subject property and should be labeled with addresses to correspond with the “map keyed to photos.” Photographs should be in color and can be printed on plain paper.

Signage Drawings / Sign Plan – Sign drawings or plans show where the proposed sign(s) will be located, and their size. They must be drawn to scale and labeled with dimensions of the sign itself, and additional dimensions must be provided as follows:

A sign plan for a **Ground Sign** shows the exact location of any ground sign, and must include the following measurements: from a structure indicated on the survey to the sign; from the sign edges to the property line(s); and from the sign edge to the sidewalk.

A sign plan for a **Wall Sign** or **Projecting Sign** shows the exact placement of the signage on the building, and provides the following measurements: from the ground to the bottom of the signage; from the roof line (or second floor of building) to the top of the signage, and from the side(s) of the building to the edges of the signage.

The applicant should submit photos showing where the signage will be located. Photos should be taken at a distance to show the relationship of the building to the signage. Drawings or photos should be submitted showing the size, colors, and copy (what the sign will say) of the proposed signage.

Please note, if the property or building has one or more signs already, both the application and sign plan should include information and dimensions for any/all sign(s) that will remain. If more than one sign (new plus existing) is proposed, the sign plan should be labeled to correspond with the “SIGN INFORMATION” section of the application, i.e. 1 -6, so it is clear where each sign described on the application appears on the sign plan. If more than six signs are involved, list the additional signs using the same table format as above on an additional page.

Some useful terms for sign plans:

- Type** refers to whether the sign is a ground sign, wall sign, or projecting sign
- Height** is measured to the top of the sign above the ground;
- Dimensions** include the horizontal and vertical measurements of the sign itself;
- Setback** is the distance from the front (street) property line, not the sidewalk;
- Type of Illumination** includes internal lighting, lighting from exterior bulbs, or none.

In some cases, sign plans or sign drawings can be submitted that are not drawn to scale, but instead have every feature labeled with dimensions. Please contact the [Zoning Office](#) if you have any questions.

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Justification of Waiver – The applicant must submit a letter stating the compelling reason(s) for the requested waiver(s). Justification must include the practical difficulties which would occur without the waiver, and that reasonable alternatives do not exist. Justification of waiver can also include any mitigating factors in the proposed plans; i.e., actions that are being proposed by the applicant which are not required, but would be or have been taken to offset a potential negative impact of the proposed waiver. “Justification of Waiver” does not apply to applications for use variance or area variance; see “Standards of Proof.”