

CITY OF WAUWATOSA



GUIDE TO OPENING OR EXPANDING YOUR BUSINESS

IN WAUWATOSA



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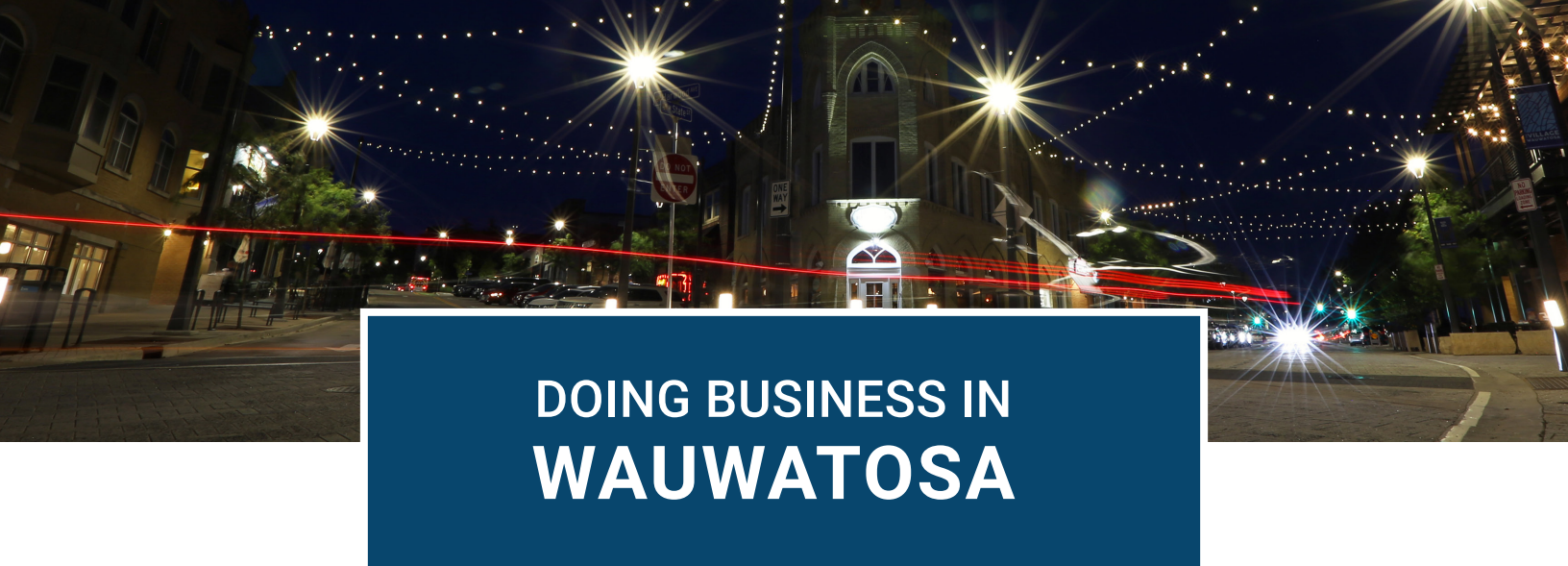
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DOING BUSINESS IN WAUWATOSA

To help facilitate the opening of your new or expanding business and expedite the approval process, this guide will direct you through the various steps and necessary approvals you will need from City departments as you launch your business venture.

Each business needs to obtain relevant approvals before opening. Completing these requirements will help you avoid unnecessary delays. Requirements vary according to the type of business you start or expand, but the following steps will help you know what to expect.

Here is a summary of the approval process described in greater detail throughout this guide:

- Create a business plan or summary
- 1.** Schedule a call or meeting with Economic Development staff
- 2.** Apply for an Occupancy Permit and schedule an inspection
- 3.** Obtain other required permits and licenses, if applicable:
 - Zoning Permits
 - Building Permits
 - Parking & Site Plan Permit
 - Sign Permit
 - Business Operator License
 - Food Establishment License





Step 1

Schedule a Call or Meeting with Economic Development Staff

A brief call or meeting with Economic Development staff can address required approvals you may need or unique considerations with your business or site.

The purpose of this meeting is to guide you through the approval process successfully. From this initial consultation, staff will inform you if you can operate your business at your desired location and how to obtain the following information for other required permits:

- Zoning permits
- Occupancy and building permits
- Site permits for things such as parking lots, driveways, right-of-way use
- Sign permits
- Business operator license, including liquor licenses
- Food establishment license
- Contacts for relevant city departments

***** Before entering into a lease or offer to purchase for your commercial space, please contact City staff and be able to answer the following:**

- Is your business permitted by zoning at the location you have chosen? Depending on the zoning of the property, you may need to obtain zoning permits prior to undertaking building renovations or opening your business.
- Does your business constitute a change of use from the previous use of the property? Please discuss your business use and potential required building code upgrades with city building inspectors.
- What improvements are needed to make the building or site function for your business?
- How will your business impact traffic and parking in the area?

Link to property search information:

Visit www.wauwatosa.net and search for "property information." Enter the address of your location to see specifics on the site, including the zoning.



Schedule a Consultation

To schedule a consultation, contact the Economic Development Division:

(414) 479.3520

economicdevelopment@wauwatosa.net
wauwatosa.net/economic-development



Step 2

Apply for an Occupancy Permit & Schedule an Inspection

Occupancy Permit:

An Occupancy Permit, for a new or expanding business or those changing ownership, must be issued before you can operate your business. Most businesses permitted by zoning are approved at this stage if no building or site construction is planned.

The occupancy permit inspection process involves review of existing conditions for the maintenance of building systems and discussion of whether the premise will be altered or remodeled in any way. If necessary, building, electrical, plumbing, fire and health inspectors must each approve the occupancy. If the premise has deficiencies, the inspector will send a written Notice of Correction to the applicant and the property owner. Inspectors may require additional permits and inspections for the corrective works list in the Notice.

When all work is complete, a final inspection is required prior to opening your business. An Occupancy Permit will be issued with all final inspection and approvals.

Apply for an Occupancy Permit with the Building & Safety Division and begin the application and inspection process through the City's self service permit portal:

Phone: (414) 479-8907

Email: tbuilding@wauwatosa.net

Website: www.wauwatosa.net/government/departments/building-safety/permits/occupancy-permit





Step 3

Obtain Other Required Permits and Licenses

I. Zoning

Zoning is a tool that divides the city into distinct districts for the purpose of regulating where business activities and residential uses occur. Zoning designates the use of property to create a mix of business, manufacturing, parks/open space and residential areas within the city.

The zoning of your location determines if your business is permitted by right, requires a conditional use or other zoning permit, or is not permitted. Additionally, if you expand or make changes to your business (e.g., create an outdoor patio, add a drive-thru, add a new activity, etc.), zoning approvals may apply.

The Plan Commission is the body that reviews zoning applications and meetings are monthly. Common Council approval follows the Plan Commission meeting.

Contact the Planning Division to discuss your application prior to submission:

Phone: (414) 479-8957

Email: tplanning@wauwatosa.net

Website: wauwatosa.net/zoning-permits



2. Building Permits

Building permits are required for new construction and when certain work is performed that modifies, converts or expands a building to ensure that building codes are met. Building codes provide quality assurance that all construction is in compliance with minimum standards for life and health safety. Building & Safety's mission draws upon long-held traditional community values grounded in uniform and consistent code enforcement, preserving property values and neighborhoods along with safeguarding the public.

Building permits are required for, but not limited to, the following:

- Interior building alterations including new, removed, and relocated walls, doors, windows, or other building elements
- Electrical work including new, removed or relocated lights, outlets, wiring or equipment
- Plumbing work including new, removed, or relocated sinks, toilets drains, grease traps, or other fixtures; sprinkler systems, fire alarms, or other life safety measures
- Exterior building modifications, which typically require site landscaping and architectural review
- Projects of a certain size and/or type require State plan approval

Wauwatosa requires valid certifications, registrations, and licenses for different contractors. Generally speaking, licenses and certifications mean that a person or contractor has shown some level of proficiency through testing or a quality control standard. The following is required:

- All building contractors, including subcontractors, working on commercial buildings must hold a valid State of Wisconsin Building Contractor Registration
- Electrical contractors must hold a valid State of Wisconsin Master Electrician's License
- Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) contractors, including installation and service work, must hold a valid State of Wisconsin HVAC Registration
- Plumbing contractors work must hold a valid State of Wisconsin Master Plumber's or Journeyman's Plumber's License

Building & Safety Hours of Operation Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Design Review of Exterior Building Modifications

Design Review Board (DRB) reviews and approves the exterior design and aesthetic aspects of building projects. Their purpose is to promote good design and continuity which positively impacts the appearance of the property and value of the neighborhood.

Discuss your design submission with the Building & Safety Division prior to completing your application to ensure adequate information for your request. DRB meets the first and third Thursday of the month.

DRB applications are submitted via the City's self service portal:

www.wauwatosa.net/government/departments/building-safety/design-review-board





3. Parking & Site Plan Approval

Modifying or constructing site features on your commercial property requires parking lot and site plan approval. Applications, timelines and fees can be found on the Engineering webpage listed below. Examples of site features needing approval include (but are not limited to):

- Parking Layout
- Sidewalks
- Handicap access to the building
- Utilities
- Landscaping
- Lighting
- Fencing
- Dumpster

Contact the Engineering Division prior to submitting your parking lot & site plan application:

Phone: (414) 479-8934

Email: tengineering@wauwatosa.net

Website: wauwatosa.net/site-plan



4. Signage

A sign permit is required for all commercial signage. *Please note, an existing, non-conforming sign must be brought into compliance if an alteration is being made to the sign, including a new sign face for a business, and freestanding or monument signs require design approval.

Signage Application Process

In order to avoid any delays in the processing of your application, please provide the following with the application submittal:

- The proposed location of signs, landscaping, and lighting
- Sign details that include all dimensions, construction, height above grade, type of illumination, and lettering and graphics as they will appear on the sign
- Photograph(s) of existing signs and of the buildings on which signs will be placed
- (Required only for freestanding or monument signs) Samples of colors and materials—the use of white backgrounds on illuminated signs should be minimal—not more than 25% suggested
- Written permission of the building owner
- Application fee

Temporary Signs

Temporary Signs such as commercial real estate or construction signs require only the permit fee and a complete Application for Sign Permit.

For more information, please contact the Building & Safety Division:

Phone: (414) 479-8907

Email: tbuilding@wauwatosa.net

Website: www.wauwatosa.net/government/departments/building-safety/permits/sign-permit



5. Business Operator & License Approvals

Some businesses require separate operator and licensing approval in addition to an occupancy permit. The wauwatosa.net/permits website provides an overview of the various permits and licenses required for specific activities as well as a link to the self service portal for application submittal.

Contact the Clerk's Office for information:

Phone: (414) 479-8917

E-mail: tclerk@wauwatosa.net

Website: www.wauwatosa.net/permits



Common licenses include:

Alcohol – Beer/Liquor/Wine License

The City Clerk's office, under authority of the Common Council, issues annual beer, liquor, wine, operator (bartender), and temporary picnic licenses. The license year runs from July 1 through June 30; renewal applications are sent to current license holders in April. Bartender (Operator) Licenses are issued to individuals responsible for selling/serving alcohol beverages.

Arcade License

Issued to businesses with 5 or more amusement devices. Additionally, an Amusement Device license is required for each amusement device or pinball machine.

Massage Therapist or Bodywork Therapist License

This license is obtained from the State's Department of Safety and Professional Services. Information can be found on the Department's website at: <https://dsps.wi.gov/pages/Home.aspx>

Precious Metals & Gems Dealer License

Applies to any entity that engages in buying, selling, or receiving or selling on consignment secondhand items made of precious metals or precious stones to or from the public as part of a retail jewelry business in which transactions concerning secondhand items comprise more than 20% of the business transacted.

Second Hand Dealer License

Applies to any entity operating, owning or leasing a fixed place of business or storage for the purchase, sale, storage, consignment or exchange of any secondhand articles of personal property.

Sidewalk Café License

Applies to any restaurant or alcoholic beverage establishment who provides outside space in the public right of way for customers to consume food or beverages.

Used Car Dealer License

Any entity engaging in the business of buying, selling, exchanging or dealing in used or secondhand automobiles must obtain a license for each business location. This license is issued only to applicants who are in the business of selling new automobiles.

6. Food Related Establishments

The Health Department issues “Guidelines for Starting a Food Business” that lists all approvals required to open a food or restaurant business in Wauwatosa.

To begin the permit process, fill out an application and submit it to the Health Department. A sanitarian will follow up with you to schedule an on-site pre-inspection. You must meet the minimum requirements in the guidelines before you are approved to open. Contact the Health Department to talk to a sanitarian with questions. Please include the establishment address and the type of establishment you’re planning.

Guidelines can be found on the website:
www.wauwatosa.net/government/departments/health/food-restaurants

Food Licenses issued by the Health Department include:

- Restaurant License
- Retail Food License
- Mobile Food License
- Temporary Food Event License
- Hotel & Pool License
- Bed and Breakfast

Health Department

Phone: (414) 479-8936 Website:
www.wauwatosa.net/government/departments/health/food-restaurants





FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The City has several financial assistance programs available to businesses and commercial property owners in Wauwatosa.

For details, visit www.wauwatosa.net/bfo

Facade, Signage, and Code Compliance Forgivable Loans

These smaller sized loans to improve building facades and signage and undertake updates for building code compliance are forgivable over a 5-year period.

Wauwatosa Revolving Loan Fund

The Wauwatosa Revolving Loan Fund Corporation provides gap financing for businesses opening or expanding in the city, structuring a loan in way to best meet the business's needs.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Business Loan Programs

These federal loan funds are available to new or expanding businesses that create jobs meeting federal program requirements. Funds can be used for acquisition, limited equipment purchase and building renovations.



BUSINESS RESOURCES

There are a wide range of resources available to businesses in Wisconsin, whether initiating a new idea or expanding a business.

Discover Wauwatosa

Wauwatosa's tourism website offers maps of Wauwatosa retail areas, listings of events, blogs about discovering businesses and more.

www.discoverwauwatosa.com

Milwaukee Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)

MEDC serves area businesses by providing short term "gap" financing, typically at a below market interest rate. Financial resources facilitate business investment that provides benefits through new employment opportunities, job retention, and neighborhood stabilization. MEDC also refers businesses to many available resources to assist in financing projects.

www.medconline.com

SCORE

A nonprofit organization dedicated to helping small businesses get off the ground, grow and achieve their goals through education and mentorship. The website offers information about workshops and mentoring as well as helpful templates and tools.

www.score.org

Small Business Association

The SBA's website has an array of topics pertaining to starting a business.

www.sba.gov

Wauwatosa Chamber of Commerce

The Wauwatosa Chamber is a proactive business association serving its members by providing networking, professional education and marketing. Collaborating with government entities and other partners we strive to improve the economic health of Wauwatosa.

www.tosawestallischamber.org

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)

WEDC Programs include tax credits, business loans, grants, and training.

www.wedc.org

Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC)

WWBIC is a leading economic development corporation that provides quality business education, technical assistance and access to capital for startup businesses.

www.wwbic.com



CITY DEPARTMENTS



Wauwatosa City Hall
7725 West North Avenue
Wauwatosa, WI 53213
www.wauwatosa.net

Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Assessor's Office

(414) 479-8969

Attorney's Office

(414) 479-8905

City Clerk's Office

(414) 479-8921

tclerk@wauwatosa.net

(Business Operator Licenses, including Liquor Licenses)

Development Department

(414) 479-8907

Building & Safety Division

(414) 479-8907

tbuiding@wauwatosa.net

(Occupancy Permits, Building Permits, Sign Permits, Design Review Board)

Economic Development Division

(414) 479-3521

economicdevelopment@wauwatosa.net

(Initial Consult Meeting, Financial Assistance)

Engineering Services Division

(414) 479-8929

tengineering@wauwatosa.net

(Parking Lot & Site Plan Permit, Sanitary Sewer, Storm Water Management, Floodplain)

Fire Department

Fire Station #51, 1601 Underwood Avenue

Fire Prevention Division

(414) 471-8457

(Fire Suppression and Detection Systems, Hydrant Locations, Hazardous Material Storage)

Health Department

(414) 479-8936

(Food Establishment Licenses)

Planning Division

(414) 479-8957

tplanning@wauwatosa.net

(Zoning Permits, Property Setback and Zoning Code Requirements)

Police Department

(414) 471-8430

Water Utility

(414) 479-8963

(New Water Service, Meter Setting, Water Service Line Abandonment, Fire Protection Requirements)