

**Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies  
Local Permitting Survey**

1) For statistical purposes, please identify the name of the municipality you represent?

\_\_\_\_\_

2) What is your official municipal capacity?

- Elected
- Appointed
- Staff

3) Please identify your municipal governance structure (check all that apply).

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> City Council/ Mayor              | <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Selectmen/ Executive Secretary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City Council/ City Manager       | <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Selectmen/ Town Moderator      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Aldermen/ Mayor         | <input type="checkbox"/> Town Council                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Selectmen/ Town Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> Representative Town Meeting             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Selectmen/ Town Admin.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Open Town Meeting                       |

4) Please identify which entity must approve a special permit for commercial/industrial projects (check all that apply).

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Board          | <input type="checkbox"/> City/Town Council/Board of Aldermen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning Board of Appeals | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Selectmen      |  |

5) Does your municipality employ professional zoning and permitting, planning, conservation, economic development and/or community development staff? Yes  No

6) If so, how many employees staff:

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| Total professional zoning and permitting, planning, conservation, economic development and/or community development staff? | _____ |
| Planning Board?  | _____ |
| Zoning Board of Appeals?   | _____ |
| Conservation Commission?   | _____ |
| Board of Health?   | _____ |
| Housing Commission, Committee, or Partnership?   | _____ |
| Economic Development Agency?   | _____ |
| Other _____  | _____ |

7) Does your community have a Community Development Plan under Executive Order 418 or other comprehensive or master land use plan? Yes  No

8) If so, when was it approved? \_\_\_\_\_

9) Are any permit applications reviewed by staff to determine acceptance as a complete permit application? Yes  No

10) Does any board vote such acceptance? Yes  No

11) Please estimate how many public meetings or hearings are required for all local permits necessary to develop a commercial/industrial project of 50,000 square feet of gross buildable floor area or greater? \_\_\_\_\_

12) Please identify the type of coordination that occurs among municipal permitting boards and their staff (check all that apply).

- Pre-development application submittal meeting between developer and members of multiple boards
- No coordination among municipal boards
- Informal conversations among municipal staff and/or board liaisons
- Regularly scheduled meetings to discuss development proposals
- Local Technical Review Committee
- Formal joint board hearings
- Regional discussions with boards/staff of other municipalities, facilitated by RPAs
- Regional discussions with boards/staff of other municipalities, pursued independently

13) Beginning on the date the first application is filed, please estimate the average total length of time it takes for your municipality to issue all of the necessary permits for a commercial/industrial development greater than 50,000 square feet of gross buildable floor area (please check one)?

- Less than 6 months
- 6-12 months
- 12 – 18 months
- 18-24 months
- Longer than two years
- Not applicable (i.e., no commercial/industrial development of that size has been permitted within the last seven years)

14) Beginning on the date the first application is filed, please estimate the average total length of time it takes for your municipality to issue all of the necessary permits for a commercial/industrial development between 10,000 and 50,000 square feet (please check one)?

- Less than 6 months
- 6-12 months
- 12 – 18 months
- 18-24 months
- Longer than two years
- Not applicable (i.e., no commercial/industrial development of that size has been permitted within the last seven years)

15) Approximately what percent of permits necessary to develop a commercial/industrial property are issued within the statutory time period from the date of submission, or within 90 days if no time period is set by statute?

- 5-25%       25-50%       50-75%       75-100%       Unknown

16) Please identify the municipal boards for which you pay for or mandate training (check all that apply).

- Planning Board
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Conservation Commission
- Board of Health

17) Does your municipality have an interstate highway interchange? Yes  No

18) Does your municipality have commercially/industrially zoned property located within two miles of an interstate highway interchange? Yes  No  N/A

19) Does your municipality have a subway, rail, or inter-modal transit station? Yes  No

20) Does your municipality have commercially/industrially zoned property located within one-quarter mile of a subway, rail, or, inter-modal transit station? Yes  No  N/A

21) Does your municipality:

- Post its regulatory bylaws, ordinances and application forms online? Yes  No
- Offer a written guide to obtaining local permits for proponents of development in your municipality? Yes  No
- Have a specific written list of permit application requirements for all special permit application?

Yes  No

- Have site plan review for commercial/industrial developments? Yes  No
- Provide a single point of contact to interact with individuals and businesses that wish to propose a development in your municipality? Yes  No
- Use a combined application form among all permitting boards for development proposals? Yes  No
- Utilize engineering/planning firms to assist with development reviews? Yes  No
- Utilize regional planning agency personnel to assist with development reviews? Yes  No
- Utilize permit tracking software? Yes  No
- Include specific dimensional requirements in your zoning bylaw/ordinance for:
  - Parking space size and parking lot aisle width? Yes  No
  - Commercial driveway design standards including minimum turn radii and widths? Yes  No
  - Permeable services standards, including landscaping? Yes  No

22) Have any of the previous design standards referenced in question 21 been modified in the past seven years? Yes  No

23) On a scale from 1-10, what is the biggest barrier to permitting commercial/industrial development in your municipality (10 being the most significant hurdle)?

- Transportation access/congestion \_\_\_\_\_
- Water/sewer infrastructure \_\_\_\_\_
- Lack of local desire for commercial/industrial development \_\_\_\_\_
- Lack of planning and permitting resources \_\_\_\_\_
- State permitting requirements and procedures \_\_\_\_\_
- Lack of meeting quorums preventing timely board actions \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

24) Is the amount of new commercial/industrial development being built in your community (check all that apply):

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too much    | <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong locations                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too little  | <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong types                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> About right | <input type="checkbox"/> Being done without proper controls/mitigation |

25) Are you familiar with MGL Chapter 43D? Yes  No

26) Are you currently considering using MGL Chapter 43D? Yes  No

27) Are you familiar with MGL Chapter 40R? Yes  No

28) Are you currently considering using MGL Chapter 40R? Yes  No

29) What suggestions do you have to make the municipal permitting process more efficient and predictable for commercial/industrial development in your municipality?

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30) On a scale from 1-10, what is the biggest barrier to permitting residential development in your municipality (10 being the most significant hurdle)?

- Transportation access/congestion \_\_\_\_\_
- Water/sewer infrastructure \_\_\_\_\_
- Lack of local appetite for residential development \_\_\_\_\_
- Lack of planning and permitting resources \_\_\_\_\_
- State permitting requirements and procedures \_\_\_\_\_
- Concern over schools or other related cost increases \_\_\_\_\_
- Lack of meeting quorums preventing timely board actions \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

31) Is the amount of new residential development being built in your municipality (check all that apply):

- Too much
- Too little
- About right
- Wrong locations
- Wrong types
- Being done without proper controls/mitigation

32) What suggestions do you have to make the municipal permitting process more efficient and predictable for residential development in your municipality?

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33) If you are willing to be contacted regarding this survey, please provide your contact information here:

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Thank You!