

Zoning and Permits¹

In order to successfully operate a business in the West Bayfront (and the City of Erie generally), businesses must be able to navigate certain regulatory requirements. This section provides a high-level overview of the permitting and zoning process and identifies key contacts. Complying with these requirements at the outset is crucial to ensure no unwanted interruptions occur in a business's operations.

Permits:

The City of Erie issues permits for various purposes including building, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, demolition, signage, fencing, parking lots, occupancy, etc. Types of work that is regulated include:

- Constructing, demolishing, renovating, repairing, or adding additions to a building or structure
- Building systems additions, improvements, or modifications including fire alarms, suppression systems, electrical work, plumbing work, and mechanical work.
- Installation of new or modification of existing signs, fencing, or parking lots
- Certification of Child Care Facilities
- Certification of the occupancy and/or use of existing buildings or structures and the legal number of occupants permitted in assembly spaces, buildings, or structures

Generally speaking, any change or modification to a building or structure likely warrants a permit from the City. The permitting process is a multi-step procedure. Depending on the type of permit that is required will dictate the application you must fill out and the information you must provide. The permit process also includes a review to ensure compliance with other areas, including zoning, building code, and utility / stormwater management.

General Information about permits as well as various permit applications can be found here: <https://cityof.erie.pa.us/business/applications/permits/>. You can also reach the Code Enforcement office by phone (814) 870-1313 or via email permits@erie.pa.us. Andy Zimmerman is the Manager of Code Enforcement and can be reached directly at (814) 870-1470 and AZimmerman@erie.pa.us.

Zoning:

The City of Erie's zoning ordinance divides all land within the City of Erie into districts and creates regulations that apply generally to the municipality as a whole as well as specifically with individual zoning districts. As stated above, the Zoning Department is heavily involved in the permitting and approval process and is the first stop for obtaining most construction permits in the City of Erie.

The City's zoning map is available here: [City of Erie Zoning Map](#). The majority of the West Bayfront is zoned as R-2 Medium Density Residential Districts, and is for one to four family residential. There are also smaller portions of the West Bayfront zoned as R-1 Low Density

¹ Important Notice: The information in this guide does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice; instead, all information, content, and materials available on this guide are for general informational purposes only. Please contact the individuals identified on this guide should you have any questions.

Residential and R-3 High Density Residential. These areas are reserved for residential use and generally not available for business use without a zoning change.

The West Bayfront also contains a good deal of property which is zoned as RLB, which is a Residential Limited Commercial District. Generally speaking, the area between Sassafras St. and Myrtle St. from 5th St. to 11th St as well as larger areas on 6th St. (from Sassafras St. to Walnut St.) 8th St. (from Sassafras St. to Cherry St.), 10th St. (from Sassafras St. to Cherry St.), and the north-side of 11th St. (from Sassafras St. to Liberty St.). While RLB still contains residential properties, it also allows limited local retail commercial activities, and many other limited commercial activities, especially those associated with the owner's home. The City's Zoning Ordinances provide a comprehensive list of permitted uses.

The West Bayfront also has areas which are exclusively dedicated to business. A portion of 8th St. between Walnut St. and Chestnut St., as well the area at 4th St and Cherry St. are zoned as C-1 Local Commercial. These areas are for small scale retail shopping facilities, and other small-scale business uses in locations where they can offer goods and services to nearby residents conveniently without adversely affecting residential properties. Many of the permitted uses are similar to that of the RLB and a comprehensive list of permitted uses can be found in the City's Zoning Ordinance. The West Bayfront also contains some area (primarily along 12th St), which are designated for Manufacturing (M-2 for Heavy Manufacturing). Finally, there are special zoning rules and classifications for all properties along the Bayfront Connector Area.

General information about Zoning and valuable FAQs can be found here:

<https://cityof.erie.pa.us/business/applications/zoning/> You can reach the Zoning Office by phone at (814) 870-1265. Jake Welsh is the Chief Zoning Officer and can be reached at (814) 870-1273 or JWelsh@erie.pa.us.

