



# **Strafford Regional Planning Commission**

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*“Planning and action for sustainable development and an improved quality of life”.*

Fact Sheet:

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## **Third Party Site and Subdivision Plan Review**

Site Plan and Subdivision Plan Review is a critical tool to implement a Master Plan and municipal ordinances and regulations. To help the Planning Board ensure an effective review, professional planner and other technical review is required. The need for this review starts with the Planning Board members wanting professional advise to help the Board make the best possible decisions to benefit the municipality. The Town and the Applicant can save thousands of dollars in real money and time. Applicants do appreciate a thorough and professional review of the issues to assist in decision-making. It clarifies issues and facilitates decision-making.

## **SRPC Subdivision and Site Plan Application Review Services**

SRPC provides professional planning services to member communities at a contracted rate as set annually by the Executive Committee of the Commission. These services are particularly useful for those communities who have volunteer Planning Boards. The service contracts are negotiated with member communities at the initiation of a Planning Board. The following describes the Subdivision and Site Plan Application Review Services. (Note: A Planning Board may choose to have every Application reviewed, or to have only the more complex or larger Applications reviewed.) Typically all site plans as well as subdivisions involving the creation of four or more lots (a major subdivision) warrant a third party review. Typically this takes one to two hours to review and another hour to prepare a report to the Planning Board.

### **Scope of Services**

The Strafford Regional Planning Commission staff (SRPC) will:

- Review Subdivision and/or Site Plan Application for Completeness.

The Municipality’s Planning Board (Client) or agent shall deliver the Plan and supporting Application information to SRPC at least 20 calendar days prior to the next scheduled Planning Board meeting. (If the Plan is to be picked up by SRPC, the Client shall be billed at the respective hourly billing rate for the time spent.) Using the Planning Board’s ordinance or regulations, SRPC will review the Application for completeness (i.e. Completeness Review) and advise whether sufficient information is included with the Application to allow the Board to make an informed decision per RSA 676:4 (I)(b) and the applicable local municipal ordinances and regulations.

In addition, if appropriate, SRPC will recommend using other technical or professional advisors necessary to have sufficient information or peer review of the Application. Typically this involves retaining a civil engineer to review grading, drainage, and other infrastructure

- Prepare a Findings Memorandum.

SRPC shall prepare a memorandum (Findings Memorandum) to the Planning Board stating its findings regarding the Application's completeness and any other issues or recommendations regard the next steps in the Application process. Said Memorandum shall be transmitted by mail or e-mail to the Planning Board's Chair or other designated representative c/o the Municipality's Town Hall at least five days prior to the scheduled Planning Board Meeting.

- Attend the Planning Board meeting to respond to questions.

If requested by the Planning Board Chair, SRPC shall attend the Planning Board or other meeting to present the findings and answer any questions.

**Fee:**

The number of hours for review and preparation of a Memorandum can range from three to multiple hours depending upon the size and complexity of the application, information provided, and other factors. Fees are based on hourly rates. (See attached)

Note: According to RSA 676:4,I (g), the fee for the Commission's services may be charged back to the Applicant. The Planning Board will develop with the Commission a format for the report, timeframe for delivery of analyses and recommendations, necessity of site visits, attendance at meetings, responsible party within the community for notification, and other pertinent procedures.

## Subdivision and / or Site Plan Application Review Meeting with Applicant to Discuss the Proposed Application

In addition, the Planning Board may want SRPC to meet with the Applicant to discuss the proposed Application and Plan. These meetings are an excellent opportunity to portray the goals of the Master Plan and Planning Board priorities, and to discuss design and other factors that may be relevant to the proposed project. This process is specified under RSA 676:4, II (b), Design Review Phase, which states that the Planning Board or its designee may engage in non-binding discussions with the applicant provided there is notification to abutters and general notice to the public. The primary purpose is to share information about the community's plans, processes and regulations with the applicant. Again, these meetings may be charged to the applicant under RSA 676:4, I (g), if the meetings are specific to the project. The Commission staff will attend Planning Board meetings to assist Planning Board members in the discussion.

**Fee:** Based on hourly rates. (See attached)

## Other Services

For further information regarding these services, please contact Cynthia Copeland, Executive Director, at 742-2523, ext 103 or [cjc@strafford.org](mailto:cjc@strafford.org). Attached to this description of services is the respective Fiscal Year Billing Rate for Planning Services.

### Strafford Regional Planning Commission Professional Service Fees

Fiscal Year 2005

Approved by Executive Committee 6/8/2004

<b>Position</b>	<b>Per Hour</b>
Executive Director, AICP	\$75
Bookkeeper	\$46
Secretary	\$38
Office Assistant	\$30
Senior Planner, AICP	\$65
Senior Planner/Analyst	\$55
Planner/Analyst	\$45
Technician	\$30

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## Fee Paid by the Applicant

To support of this professional review, State planning law enables the cost for the review to be paid by the site plan or subdivision plan applicant.

New Hampshire Local Land Use Planning Law states:

*The Planning Board may, as part of its site plan review regulations, require an applicant to pay all costs for notification of abutters and may provide for the assessment of reasonable fees to cover the board's administrative expenses and costs of special*

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*investigation and the review of documents and other matters which may be required by particular applications. (RSA 674:44 V)*

**Implementation**

For the local municipality to implement this, the Planning Board must adopt, after a public hearing, an amendment to the Planning Board's Site Plan and Subdivision Plan Regulations. For example:

An Amendment to the Town [City] of [ Name ] Site Plan Review and Subdivision Plan Review Regulations Providing for the Applicant to Pay for Plan Review Fees

Site Plan Review Regulation

Section [ ] The applicant shall pay all costs for notification of abutters and reasonable fees to cover the Planning Board 's administrative expenses and costs of special investigation and the review of documents and other matters which may be required by particular applications.

Note: New text is underlined.

Subdivision Plan Review Regulation

Section [ ] The applicant shall pay all costs for notification of abutters and reasonable fees to cover the Planning Board 's administrative expenses and costs of special investigation and the review of documents and other matters which may be required by particular applications.

Note: New text is underlined.

Prior to final drafting of the amendment, local municipal legal counsel should review and approve the text so it is consistent with the local municipal code format.