ZONING FAQs

Q: What are the requirements for installing a shed on my property?

A: If the shed is less than 150 sq ft (smaller than 10' x 15'), less than 12' in height and not placed on permanent foundation (i.e. aggregate base,) you do not need a Zoning Permit and it can be placed anywhere on your property except the front yard. If the shed is larger than 150 sq ft and/or the shed is being placed on permanent foundation (i.e. concrete foundation), you will need a Zoning Permit and the shed cannot be placed in any of the setback areas.

Q: What is required to put a fence on my property?

A: You do not need a Zoning Permit to put a fence on your property. However, the fence should be 6-inches on your side of the property line and no greater than 8' in height. It should not impair the sight distance at an intersection if the fence is at the front of a corner lot. You must call PA One Call (811) to locate any utilities before digging.

*NOTE: Centre Region Code Administration does require a Building Permit for fences 72" and higher. Patton Township will need to sign-off on the Building Permit Application stating that "Patton Township does not require a Zoning Permit for a fence 96" or less in height."
Please click here for Fence Inspection Guidelines from Centre Region Code Administration

Q: What items are needed for a Zoning Application?

A: For a complete Zoning Permit submission, please include payment at the time of application, water and sewer permits (or on-lot septic permit), site plan showing the lot and the distances to all property lines and location of septic system (if on-lot) and well (if applicable). If the permit submission is complete, the turnaround time is 7-10 working days. Please contact the Township office for permit fees.

Q: How can I find out where my property lines are?

A: The best way to find your property lines are to locate the corner pins (if you have your property deed, this will be helpful). If they have been removed or cannot be located, you may need to hire a surveyor to perform a property survey. The Township does not perform property surveys.

Q: What is permitted as far as a home business/home occupation in Patton Township?

A: A "home occupation" is an accessory which is clearly incidental or secondary to the residential use of the dwelling unit, and is customarily carried on within a dwelling unit or accessory building by one or more occupants of such dwelling unit:does not permit selling articles produced elsewhere than on the premises, having exterior displays of goods visible from the outside or making external alterations which are not customary in residential buildings; and includes the following occupations: professional offices such as for the practice of medicine, dentistry, architecture, law and engineering, artists, beauticians, barbers, veterinarians (excluding stables or kennels) and other occupations which do not create objectionable noise, glare, smoke, odor, vibration, electrical interference, fire hazards, substantially increased traffic or other nuisances and does not permit the full-time employment of more than two persons not living on the premises; does not use more than 25% or 500 sq. ft., whichever is less, of the total floor area of the dwelling; and provides adequate off-street parking if needed.

ZONING FAQs

Q: What is required for obtaining a Rental Housing Permit?

A: Rental Housing Permits are issued through the Centre Region Code Office. The first step is to complete the Rental Housing Permit Application, which can be found on the Township's website. The Application must be brought to the Township office first for the Zoning Officer to complete the Zoning portion. Patton Township does require a $30 application fee for Rental Housing Permit Applications for all new rentals and any change in ownership. The Rental Housing Permit Application is then scanned an emailed to the Centre Region Code Office for their completion.

Q: Do solar arrays require a Zoning Permit?

A: Roof mount solar arrays do not require a Zoning Permit however, a Building Permit will be required by the Centre Region Code Office. Patton Township will need to sign off on the Application for Zoning and Building Permit noting that "No Zoning is Required" for roof mounted solar arrays to satisfy the Centre Region Code Office. Ground mounted solar arrays do require a Zoning Permit and cannot be placed within the setbacks.

For more information on Going Solar in the Centre Region, visit this link.

Q: What is planning?

A: According to the American Planning Association (APA), planning is "a dynamic discipline that works to improve the welfare of people and their communities by creating more convenient, equitable, healthful, efficient, and attractive places for present and future generations. Planning enables civic leaders, businesses, and citizens to play a meaningful role in creating communities that enrich people's lives. Good planning helps create communities that offer better choices for where and how people live. Planning helps communities to envision their future. It helps them find the right balance of new development and essential services, environmental protection, and innovative change."

Planning is the act of looking to the future, identifying what is desired, and then taking actions today to achieve identified goals. As noted in the APA's definition, planning is a dynamic discipline that can focus on a wide variety of issues that relate to creating and sustaining communities that are beneficial to the people that live, work, and visit them.

Planning in Patton Township and the Centre Region

Planning can take place at varying scales, from planning for development at the block or neighborhood scale to planning for major issues at the state or national level. Patton Township, along with College, Ferguson, Halfmoon, and Harris Townships and State College Borough, is a member municipality in the Centre Region Council of Governments. In the Centre Region, planning is done at both the municipal level as well as at the multi-municipal (regional) level.

This unique approach to planning began in the early 1960s when the Centre Region municipalities sought to plan for growth and development at a scale that extended beyond their individual municipal boundaries. By planning for growth and change at both the local and regional level, the Centre Region has been able to maintain an attractive, vibrant community.

Q: Why do we plan?

A: Planning provides direction on how growth and change should be managed to benefit everyone who lives, works, or visits a community. Planning at both the large and small scales helps ensure that processes and actions are harmoniously working towards the same end. There are many tangible benefits related to planning that go beyond making great places and communities, such as:

- Saving Money: One of the key benefits of planning for the future of a community is the ability to anticipate and budget for needed improvements and services that are often provided or maintained by the municipality. Water, sewer, fire, police, and road maintenance are services that growth and development often require. If growth is not carefully planned for, the costs to provide these services increase and ultimately, are passed on to taxpayers. The Centre Region's longstanding policy of directing most of its growth to areas within a defined Regional Growth Boundary have resulted in greater efficiencies in providing these types of services.
- Establishing Ground Rules for Development: Planning creates ground rules that define how growth and development can occur within the community. These ground rules can send a clear signal to both property owners and developers on what is anticipated and required, including the greater community impacts such as parkland, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, and other improvements. This can help to minimize conflicts and provide developers with an understanding of what to expect when a development proposal is submitted.

- Promoting Community Design: Community design attempts to provide a balance between uses, architectural styles, building scale and massing, and the built and natural environments. For example, if a tall, multi-story steel office building were located adjacent to a single-family residential neighborhood without any buffers or setbacks, this type of design could have negative impacts on the character of the area and would create a design problem. Good community design helps to minimize conflicts and maintain a character and sense of place throughout the community.
- Protecting Property Values. Planning can help protect property from negative impacts and help to stabilize property value. A good example of this would be if a heavy industrial use was located adjacent to a single-family residential area. There is a high likelihood that residential property owners that lived adjacent to the industrial use would be impacted by noise, pollution, and other nuisances related to higher intensity uses. The value of these homes would likely decrease since the livability of the neighborhood would be greatly affected. Community planning can help protect property and its value by ensuring that land uses are compatible with their surrounding built and natural environments.
- Protecting Natural and Environmental Resources. Planning can help ensure that natural and environmental resources are protected and made available for future generations. Prior to the advent of modern planning, many natural and environmental resources were exploited without the understanding that these resources were vital to a community's well-being and would be difficult if not impossible to restore. Developing near natural and environmental features may result in additional hazards that could easily be avoided. Planning can help strike a balance between the built and natural environments, protecting both the community and flora and fauna.

Q: Where do municipalities get their authority to plan?

A: In Pennsylvania, the authority to plan is established by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), which delegates the responsibility for planning to each municipality and county. The MPC specifically grants municipalities with the authority to create and abolish, through ordinance, a planning agency. The MPC outlines several options for establishment of a planning agency including a citizen led planning commission, a professional planning department, a planning committee comprised of elected officials, or a combination thereof.

The most common form of planning agency in Pennsylvania is the citizen led planning commission, which is governed by municipally adopted bylaws. In the Centre Region, each municipality has an established planning commission. The Centre Regional Planning Agency, in addition to regional planning services, provides local professional planning services to Halfmoon, Harris, and Patton Townships.