

## 5.2 Adapt Permitting Process to Promote Sustainable Development

5 – 45 Points

### Action Updates

This action has been revised for the **current certification cycle**. A version of this action from the prior program year is [available for comparison](#). Edits are highlighted in yellow. (Last updated 2024)

### Objective

Promote and incentivize sustainable development by creating an efficient and user-friendly land use permitting process.

Complementary Action:

- [Integrate Sustainability into Plan of Conservation and Development](#)

### What to Do

*The more you do, the more points you earn.*

1. Develop sustainability checklists for zoning and building applicants that identify sustainable site plan design elements. Examples are available in the "[Sustainability Concepts in Action](#)" sheet. **(5 points)**

**Submit:** Copies of your sustainability checklists currently distributed to zoning and building applicants.

2. Identify applications where expedited permitting is viable and amend zoning regulations to provide an as-of-right (Site Plan) approval process for projects that meet sustainable design standards as established in the regulations (for example, SolSmart). Consider including projects located in distressed/under-developed/vulnerable areas. **(20 points)**

**Submit:** Copy of the zoning or regulations; documentation that the regulations have been adopted (such as meeting minutes, a copy of the municipal zoning regulations with relevant portions highlighted, a link to municipal ordinances, or similar verification).

3. Establish or amend your municipal policy for pre-application review.

*The more you do, the more points you earn.*

**a.** Adopt an internal procedure that recommends review of projects prior to submission of formal plans and applications. The procedure should incorporate a coordinated review by all relevant departments, a coordinated review schedule for approval by all relevant departments, and clearly reference the checklist and standards developed above for sustainable plan review. **(10 points)**

**Submit:** A copy of the written procedure describing the pre-application review process.

**b.** Review town processes for permitting and create a Development Review Manual that includes a description of the pre-application process established. A Development Review Manual is a step-by-step guide to navigating your municipal land use process from start to finish. **(10 points)**

**Submit:** A copy of your current Development Review Manual.

## Engaging Partners

Sustainable CT encourages regional collaboration and other forms of partnership. For every action, please complete the "Partners" box in your submission, indicating the name(s) of any municipalities and/or organizations you partnered with (if any) and a brief description of your municipality's role. If you collaborate with other municipalities, each community will receive points. For additional information, please see the "[Partners Guidance Document](#)".

## Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

Staff from the planning and zoning, engineering, building, and fire departments and a representative from the planning and zoning, inland wetlands, conservation, or energy commission could be helpful in implementing this action.

## Funding

If available, below are potential funding sources specific to this Action. For a complete listing of potential funding opportunities to assist with implementing Sustainable CT Actions, please visit the [Sustainable CT Grants Portal](#), which is searchable by Action. Please also visit the [Support for Your Town](#) page for opportunities for technical assistance and other supports.

- [Urban Act Grant Program](#)
- [Municipal Grant Program \(MGP\)](#)
- [Sustainable CT Community Match Fund](#)

## Resources

### *Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents*

- Capitol Region Council of Governments, "[Sustainable Land Use Regulation Project](#)"
- US Environmental Protection Agency, "[Sustainable Design and Green Building Toolkit for Local Governments](#)"
- New York City Department of Design and Construction Office of Sustainable Design, "[Sustainable Urban Site Design Manual](#)"
- Acadia Center, "[Community Energy Vision, Action Guide for Connecticut](#)"
- The following resources require membership or payment to view:
  - Wayne Feiden, [Planning Advisory Service \(PAS\) Report #582 Local Planning Agency Management](#)
  - Wayne Feiden, with Elisabeth Hamin, [Planning Advisory Service Report # 565](#)
  - American Planning Association, [Zoning Practice Process Archives](#)

### *Organizations and Relevant Program*

- [American Planning Association](#)

## Benefits

By reducing permitting hurdles and administrative costs, and providing incentives to developers to incorporate sustainable elements early in a proposed project's design stage, your community can encourage and support sustainable development practices. The guide will have a dual benefit of reducing time and costs to town and applicants for projects.

## CT Success Stories