



TOWN OF NEWINGTON

200 Garfield Street Newington, Connecticut 06111

Town Planner

Paul Dickson
Town Planner

Memorandum

To: Town Plan & Zoning Commission
From: Paul Dickson, Town Planner
Date: August 3, 2023
Re: Drive through

Staff has performed research of surrounding towns and has not found a parallel to the Newington Business Town Center B-TC Zone permitting drive-through restaurants. In Towns that have more recently permitted drive-through restaurants in areas that they were previously prohibited, the criteria for those uses in commercial areas include siting requirements such as frontage on an arterial or interstate highway, limits on hours of operation, and additional criteria. The research has shown some areas where drive-through restaurant uses have been expanded, and conversely, cases where municipalities have moved to prohibit drive-through uses.

Looking beyond our neighboring towns, staff has included the American Planning Association's December 2022 publication of "Zoning Practice, Making Drive-Thrus a Boon, Not a Bane." In this publication, the author delves into the drive-through issue. The publication includes considerations for walkability, a rough outline of what might be in the regulations, and criteria to consider when reviewing a site for a drive-through. The author also explores possible zoning strategies for drive-throughs, including floating zones, and recommends testing the regulations before enacting them.

The Town of Newington Zoning Regulations currently permit drive-through restaurants in the B-BT and PD Zones by special permit. The specific sections, with their criteria, are listed below:

B-BT Business Berlin Turnpike Zone

3.15.4 Restaurants where food and/or beverages, excluding alcohol, are offered to customers from drive through service, walk up window service or service to customers while seated in their vehicles provided the following requirements are complied with. These requirements are in addition to the provision set forth in Section 5.2 and Section 5.3.

A. Traffic impact analysis describing peak hours of operations, volume of customers per hour, stacking lane length needed for the anticipated volume of drive through vehicles, turning movements, roadway capacity and level of service of nearby streets.

B. Driveway locations shall be spaced at least 150 feet from a Corner intersection. The Commission may limit the number of driveways with adjacent properties and/or inter property driveway connections when the reduction of curb cuts is deemed to improve safety.

C. Drive-through windows shall be located only on one side of the proposed restaurant building and shall be positioned to minimize conflicts with doorways and pedestrians.

D. The restaurant structure and drive-through service menu board (order intercom) shall be located not less than 300 feet from any adjacent residential structures.

PD Planned Development Zones

3.19.5 Drive Through Restaurants by special permit subject to the requirements and standards set forth in Section 5.2 and Section 5.3.

Additional Signage standards for drive through uses

6.2.1 E. (2) Digital menu board signs which are located at and utilized in connection with an accessory drive through lane. One digital menu board sign shall be permitted per each accessory drive through lane limited to fifty (50) square feet as well as one digital pre-browse menu board sign per permitted principal use on the premises limited to fifteen (15) square feet (Effective 07/15/2020).

Staff has included some excerpts from Town of Newington Plan of Conservation and Development, below, regarding the Town Center (page 37-46) pertinent information when considering a drive-through use:

Page 37:

A key issue for the POCD is how to make Newington Town Center more vibrant and attractive and relevant to the needs of the community, now and in the future. The overall goals are to encourage pedestrian-friendly development (business and mixed-use buildings) in the Town Center area which:

- Maintains and enhances a vital, useful and functional Town Center.
- Helps strengthen Town Center businesses.
- Supports the desired overall character of Newington and is sensitive to adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Carefully guides the reuse of properties for continued grand list growth.

2. Establish and maintain regulations which will support a vibrant mixture of business, civic and residential uses in Newington Town Center and a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly area with an active streetscape.
3. Continue to ensure that new development and redevelopment enhances the character, landscape and architectural quality of Newington Town Center (and maintains or re-uses existing facades and/or materials, where feasible).
8. Continue to ensure that building height and land uses at the perimeter of Newington Town Center are sensitive to adjacent residential areas.