

# READY. SET.



**easton**  
PENNSYLVANIA  
**BUSINESS GUIDE**

## THIS GUIDE WILL HELP YOU:

- ★ Understand the basic steps to plan and open your business
- ★ Understand the general licensing and permitting requirements for your business
- ★ Manage the business development process so you open quickly and efficiently
- ★ Know who you can contact for assistance





## Your Success Is Our Success

Easton was founded by Thomas Penn, son of William Penn, in 1752 as the Northampton County seat, but had been known earlier by Native Americans as "Lechawitauk" or the Place at the Forks. Easton's location at the confluence of the Delaware and Lehigh Rivers shaped the community's destiny.

**On July 8, 1776, Easton was one of only three reading sites of the Declaration of Independence. This spirit of freedom, originality and bravery continues to define the city nearly 240 years later.**

During the early nineteenth century, Easton emerged as an industrial center because of the location at the confluence of several waterways, Morris Canal and later five major railroads. The city became home to wire and silk mills, foundries and was a transportation epicenter for raw materials from the north and west and manufactured goods that moved to New York City and Philadelphia. In 1832, Easton was elevated to a cultural center with the founding of Lafayette College by citizens of the community. By the 1860s, Easton was the largest city of the Lehigh Valley and later became its major retail center.

Today, the city is known to many as the home to former Heavyweight Boxing Champion Larry Holmes, The Crayola Experience, National Canal Museum, Sigal History Museum, historic State Theatre Centre for the Arts and a lively and innovative arts, retail and restaurant scene.

The stunning geographic setting and 200 years of architectural masterpieces ensure a captivating and dramatic entry to the city from every direction. This magical and dignified landscape provide an unparalleled opportunity to showcase your business.

**Join Us!**



# LOCATION IS



# EVERYTHING!

**Our proximity to all of the Northeast's major metropolitan markets and our superb transportation network is the perfect combination for companies on the go!**



**"Printex located in Easton in 1981. After six years, we expanded into Easton's West Ward District. We are very pleased with our choice to do business in Easton. Being only minutes from New Jersey and Allentown, it allows us to service our clients with ease. Easton is continuing to grow its business community, expand its cultural opportunities and preserve its historic assets. In our line of work, we strive for excellent customer service and quality products for the most economical prices we can offer. With so many resources in place, Easton has what it takes for a new or existing business to thrive."**

**Jay Cimerol  
President  
Printex**



## UNPARALLELED AND INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICES TO MEET YOUR BUSINESS AND PERSONAL NEEDS.

- ★ Substantial Water and Sewer Infrastructure
- ★ Land Development Services
- ★ Recycling Facilities
- ★ Access to a Network of Major Highways
- ★ Full-Time, Professional Police and Fire Protection
- ★ Economic Development Services
- ★ Health and Environmental Services
- ★ Extensive Recreational and Cultural Amenities
- ★ Building Inspection Services
- ★ Excellent Educational Resources

**Easton is the most efficient, walkable and progressive city in the region, boasting unheard of access to both the natural and urban environments, arts, culture and entertainment, historic character, diverse housing options, immediate access to physical and virtual transportation networks and a ready workforce. Easton's attributes are as critical to the city's success as they are to you.**

**In most communities you are a number. In Easton you are our future and what you need matters. Time is really money, and we honor and commit to providing you with the attention and service you deserve.**

# **EASTON DOESN'T JUST MEAN BUSINESS. WE ARE BUSINESS!**

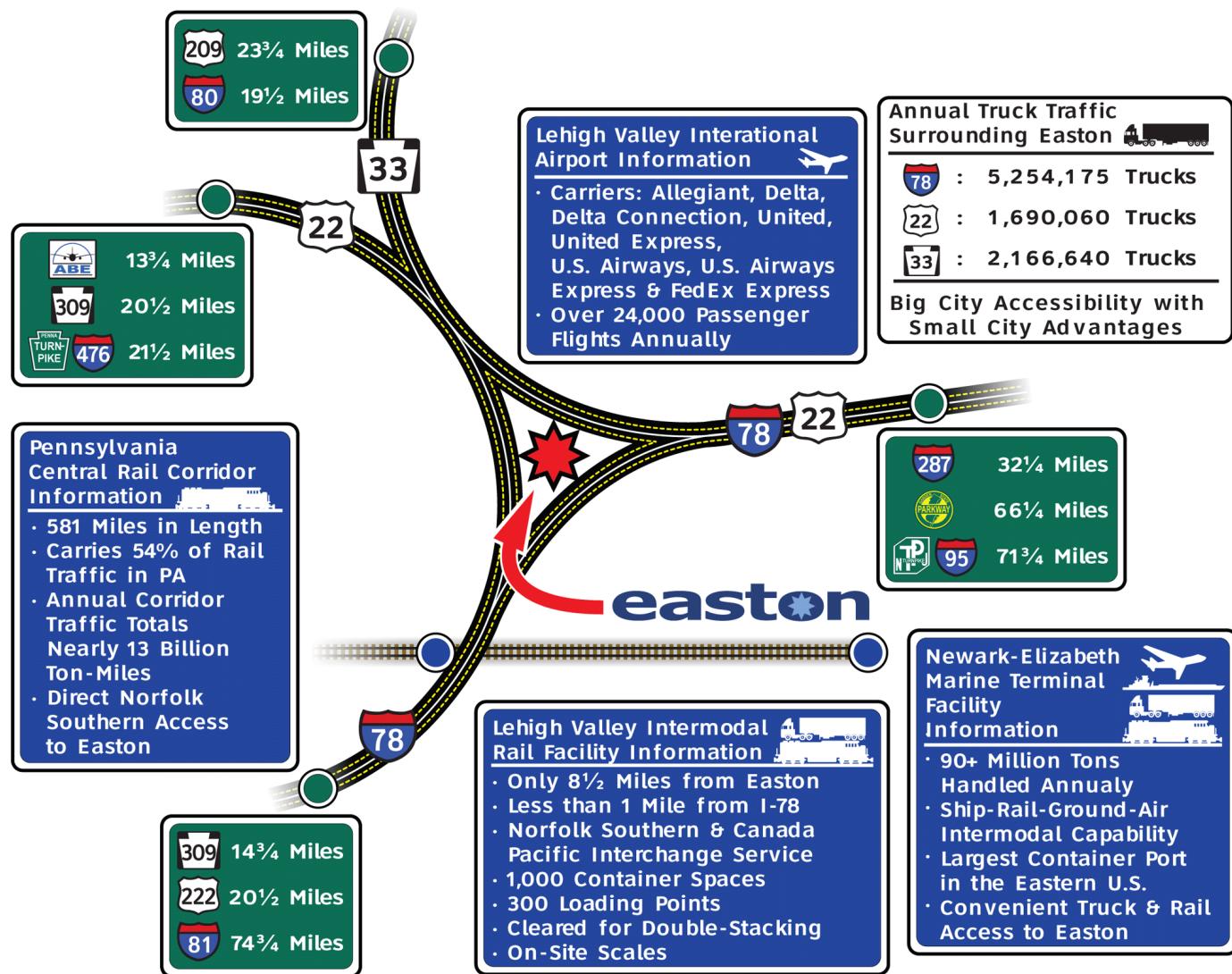
## **GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS**

Population	
City of Easton:	26,800
25-Mile Radius:	1,212,741
50-Mile Radius:	7,371,636
100-Mile Radius:	29,995,019
200-Mile Radius:	49,780,285

Households	
City of Easton:	9,222
25-Mile Radius:	452,184
50-Mile Radius:	2,701,735
100-Mile Radius:	10,982,616
200-Mile Radius:	18,445,605

Annual Income	
City of Easton:	\$476M
25-Mile Radius:	\$37,474M
50-Mile Radius:	\$243,153M
100-Mile Radius:	\$946,573M
200-Mile Radius:	\$1,578,347M

# IS BUSINESS.



## WORKFORCE

Workers	
City of Easton:	10,670
25-Mile Radius:	578,291
50-Mile Radius:	3,636,818
100-Mile Radius:	12,823,514
200-Mile Radius:	21,135,300

Jobs	
City of Easton:	8,558
25-Mile Radius:	481,885
50-Mile Radius:	3,763,726
100-Mile Radius:	13,016,544
200-Mile Radius:	21,171,205

"The downtown is full of very unique businesses. As a downtown resident myself, I rarely need to use my car. Yesterday I walked to my bank, had my computer repaired, visited an art gallery, shopped at a health food store: all within a few blocks of my home and business. I am incredibly grateful for the support I received opening a business in Easton and the warm welcome by local businesses."

Laura Parker  
Owner/Aesthetician, Resident  
The Skin Clinic Wellness & Waxing Boutique

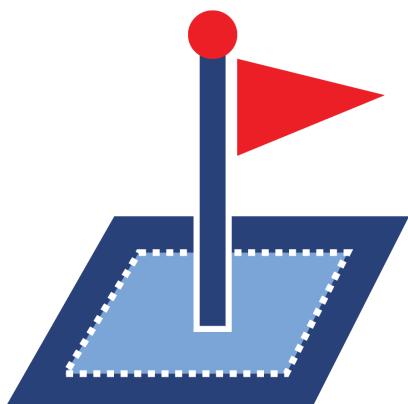


# READY. SET. BUSINESS START-UP GUIDE

## ► PREPARE A BUSINESS PLAN

A business plan will help you identify resources, prioritize them and determine how best to become profitable. Preparing a business plan is always the first step in business development. Several agencies are available to help you with your business planning.

- Small Business Development Center, Lehigh University, (610) 758-3980
- SCORE, Service Corps of Retired Executives, (610) 266-3000



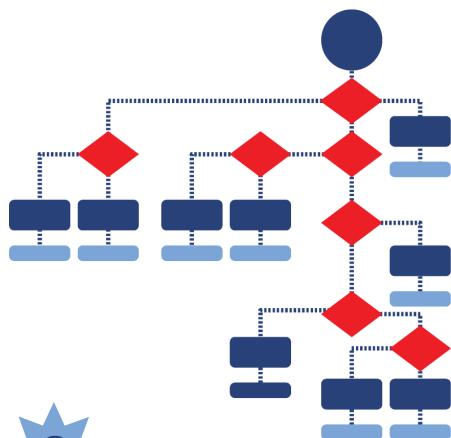
## ► SELECT YOUR SITE

Choosing a location for your business is extremely important. The City of Easton Department of Community and Economic Development is available to assist you at (610) 250-2071. If you wish to locate in the Downtown, the Greater Easton Development Partnership's Main Street Initiative can also help, and can be reached at (610) 330-9940. The West Ward Neighborhood Partnership, (610) 515-0891, is a valuable site selection resource in the western portion of the city, as well.

## ► IDENTIFY AND SECURE FINANCING

Funding your business adequately is critical to developing a successful enterprise. Several agencies and programs are available to assist you in identifying loans and other financial products to start and grow your business.

- City of Easton, Department of Community and Economic Development, (610) 250-2071
- Small Business Development Center, Lehigh University, (610) 758-3980
- Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, (610) 266-6775
- Rising Tide Community Loan Fund, (610) 691-5620



## ► DECIDE ON A BUSINESS STRUCTURE

Several options for business structures are available. Whether you choose to operate your business as a sole proprietorship, limited liability corporation, partnership or other structure, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania you must file Articles of Incorporation (form DSCB: 15-1306) and a Docketing Statement (form DSCB: 15-134A) with the Pennsylvania Department of State. Additional information may be obtained by calling (717) 787-1057 or by visiting [www.paopen4businessbriefcase.state.pa.us](http://www.paopen4businessbriefcase.state.pa.us).



## ► REGISTER YOUR BUSINESS NAME

Generally, any sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, or other form of association that conducts business under an assumed or fictitious business name must register this name with the Pennsylvania Department of State. To register you must file form DSCB: 54-311 with the Corporation Bureau of this Commonwealth agency. After registering your business name the Commonwealth requires an advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation in Northampton County, such as *The Express-Times* or *Morning Call*.

Additional information and resources are available at:

- Pennsylvania Department of State, (717) 787-1057, [www.dos.state.pa.us/corp](http://www.dos.state.pa.us/corp)
- The Express Times Newspaper, (610) 258-7171, [www.lehighvalleylive.com](http://www.lehighvalleylive.com)
- The Morning Call Newspaper, (610) 820-6565, [www.mcall.com](http://www.mcall.com)

**Hi! My name is:**

**SUCCESS!**

## ► SECURE A FEDERAL EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

Every employer subject to employment taxes must obtain a federal employer identification number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Even if you do not have reportable employees you may be required to obtain an EIN for use on tax returns, statements and other documents. Upon filing for an EIN you will be in line to receive all other federal tax forms related to operating a business. The required form (SS-4) can be downloaded from the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or by calling (800) 829-1040.

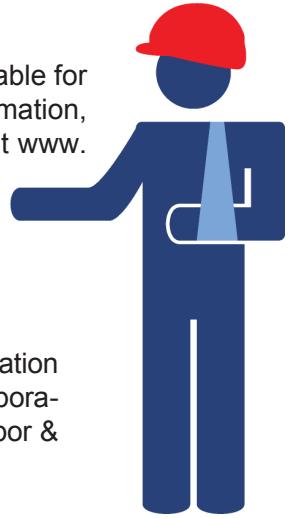




## ► REGISTER FOR PENNSYLVANIA EMPLOYER TAX ACCOUNTS

Pennsylvania law requires employers to withhold Pennsylvania personal income tax and file returns and wage and tax statements. For more information contact the PA Department of Revenue at [www.portal.state.pa.us](http://www.portal.state.pa.us) or 717-787-1064.

If you employ one or more individuals, you will be liable for state unemployment compensation. For more information, contact the PA department of Labor and Industry at [www.uc.pa.org](http://www.uc.pa.org) or 717-787-7679.



## ► OBTAIN WORKERS' COMPENSATION COVERAGE

In Pennsylvania, workers' compensation insurance is required if a person, company or corporation has any full or part-time employees. This includes employees, family members, one-person corporations and corporate officers. For more information, contact the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry's Bureau of Workers' Compensation in Harrisburg at 717-772-3702.



## ► OBTAIN EASTON APPROVALS

Once you have established a basic business plan, you will need to go through the licensing, permitting and general approval process with the City of Easton. City staff are eager to help you identify any approvals that you may need based on the specific requirements of your business.



# easton

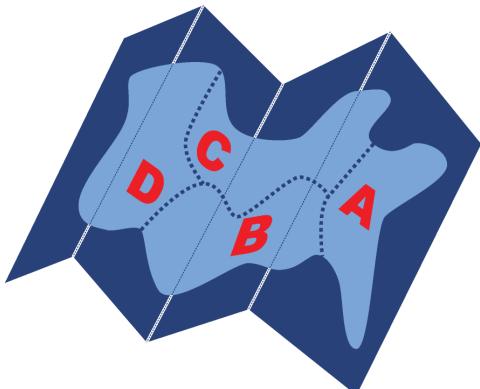
## APPROVALS

Before signing a lease or purchasing property, check with the Department of Planning and Codes to see if the location you desire allows the business you wish to create or expand and which permits or approvals are required. Generally you can expect a Planning and Codes Team Member to review your location with you to determine what you will need. Planning and Codes will also coordinate any reviews by other city departments.

### ► ZONING

**All businesses require zoning approval, as do changes to the use and occupancy of buildings/land or the operator of a business.** Generally, zoning evaluations take into consideration the previous use of the location, your intended use, parking and any type of signs you plan to install. A nominal fee is charged for this Step 1 - Business Opening Review.

If you need an exception to the requirements of the Zoning Code, the Zoning Administrator will notify you and provide you with information on how to appeal to the Zoning Hearing Board for relief. An additional fee applies if an exception is required.

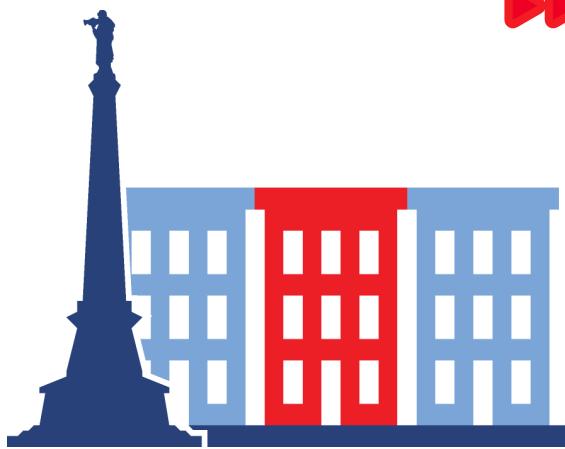


### ► SUBDIVISION + LAND DEVELOPMENT

When you apply for zoning approval, the Zoning Administrator will notify you if you need approval from the Planning Commission. **Generally, Planning Commission approval is required if you are substantially over-hauling an existing building, building a new commercial or mixed-use building, building a number of homes, or desire to create new or combine lots.** The Planning Commission also reviews all impacts associated with development and uses in the City's floodplains. Detailed plans, prepared by a Commonwealth of Pennsylvania licensed design professional are required for developments and subdivisions.

**In addition to subdivisions and land developments, the Planning Commission reviews and provides comment to the Zoning Hearing Board on special exception uses.** Special exceptions are generally uses allowed if potentially negative impacts can be addressed. Fees apply for Planning Commission review and are based on the activity proposed. Most businesses do not require Planning Commission approval but, if your plan does, your reviews will be coordinated with your zoning application to expedite the approvals process.





## ► HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

When you apply for zoning approval, the Zoning Administrator will notify you if you need a recommendation from the Historic District Commission and approval from City Council. **Historic District Commission recommendation is required if your business is located in the Downtown Historic District only. The Historic District Commission reviews for building alterations, demolition and new construction that is visible from public rights-of-way as well as business signage.** Your recommendation will be forwarded to City Council after this commission has reviewed your application. If approved, you will receive a Certificate of Appropriateness. Your review will be coordinated by the Department of Planning and Codes with all other required reviews and permits.

## ► WASTE REMOVAL + RECYCLING

**All businesses are required to secure and maintain a private waste hauler. Businesses are also required to recycle.** The Department of Public Works manages this program, though you will be required to show adequate waste and recycling areas to the Building Code and/or Health Officials before your business may open. Contact the Public Works Team for specific information on the City's Trash and Recycling Program. Businesses can also use the City's recycling drop-off center.



## ► BUILDING CODES + INSPECTIONS

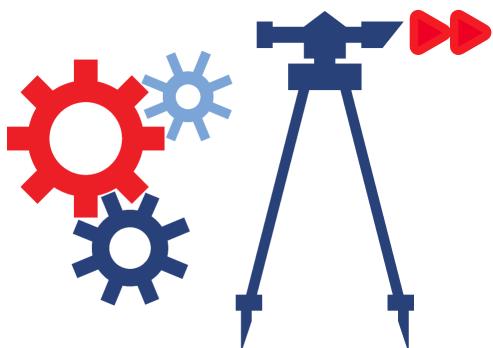
**If you intend to construct, alter, repair, demolish or change the use of a building you will need building code approval. This approval also extends to fire alert and suppression, electrical, gas, mechanical and plumbing systems in addition to any building construction or changes.** Building code approval requires that detailed plans outlining the specifics of what you intend to do be submitted and reviewed by the City's certified building code professionals. Some building plans must be developed by a Pennsylvania authorized design professional and be in compliance with the Commonwealth's Uniform Construction Code. Fees are required for permitting and inspections and are based on the size and complexity of the work you intend to do.

As of April 2004, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania assumed statewide control of all laws governing building construction and alteration, making it easier for you to know what to expect when investing here. Building safety is important to your business and the public health and welfare and key to maintaining and growing a sustainable, quality city.

Once your building plans have been reviewed and approved, an Easton Code Official will contact you about issuing construction and alteration permits. When your building permits are issued, we will coordinate an inspection schedule with you. Periodic inspections are typical with all building construction and alteration projects and dependent on the size and complexity of the project you are developing. When your project is complete, the Building Code Official and Fire Inspector will conduct a Certificate of Occupancy inspection, which includes checks for zoning, and any Planning Commission and, Historic District Commission compliance. When your Certificate of Occupancy is issued you are ready for business!

## ► **HEALTH**

**If your business involves food manufacturing, food preparation, food service, child or elder care or massage therapy, you will need approval from the Health Bureau.** The Health Bureau is charged with promoting a healthy and safe environment in the City and, as such, will assist your food or people care business to begin and grow safely here. You may need to prepare additional information and plans for health licensing depending on the scope of your project. Requirements of the Health Bureau are coordinated with the other approval bodies in the city, beginning with zoning. Additional fees are required for a Health License.



## ► **ENGINEERING**

**Generally, any portion of your business that affects public rights-of-way like new roads, sidewalks and emergency staircases attached to the exterior of buildings, requires Engineering review and approval. The Engineering Team also coordinates stormwater management and assigns city addresses.** City Council action may also be required for certain encroachments in public rights-of-way. Additional fees may apply depending on the specifics of your project.

## ► **BUSINESS LICENSING + TAXES**

**All businesses are required to secure and maintain a Business License from the Department of Finance but first you must have zoning approval.** Annually, all businesses are required to pay Business Privilege Tax, which is a percentage of the business's gross receipts, and withhold a percentage of wages from its employees' Earned Income Tax for payment to the City. For similar state requirements, visit <http://www.pabizonline.com> or call toll free at 1-855-722-4924.



# ►easton

# CONNECT

## ►CITY OF EASTON

### General Information

(610) 250-6600  
cityhall@easton-pa.gov  
www.easton-pa.gov

► **Building Codes + Inspections**  
(610) 250-6724  
codes@easton-pa.gov

► **Business Licensing + Taxes**  
(610) 250-6755  
blat@easton-pa.gov

► **Community + Economic Development**  
(610) 250-2071  
economicdevelopment@easton-pa.gov

► **Engineering**  
(610) 250-6685  
publicworks@easton-pa.gov

► **Health**  
(610) 250-6608  
health@easton-pa.gov

► **Historic District**  
(610) 250-6724  
codes@easton-pa.gov

► **Subdivision + Land Development**  
(610) 250-6721  
planning@easton-pa.gov

► **Waste Removal + Recycling**  
(610) 250-6680  
publicworks@easton-pa.gov

► **Zoning**  
(610) 250-6724  
codes@easton-pa.gov



# WELCOME HOME.

“Two-and-a-half years ago when selecting the perfect location to grow EPS Financial, Easton was a no-brainer. The downtown alone made the decision so easy for us: a great town with historic charm, neat shops, fabulous events and amazing restaurants. Our employee base in Easton has grown from two employees to 30 fulltime and 90 contracted temporary staff. Countless employees tell us how much they enjoy working downtown and they all take full advantage of it! Not one day goes by where you can't look down upon Centre Square from our offices in the Alpha Building and see our employees popping around town. Several of EPS's fulltime employees have loved the town so much that've made their home, including Clark, our President, and myself. The town has so much to offer and we love the renaissance Easton is currently experiencing. I would have never thought that in my lifetime we would be part of the revitalization of such a great place. We're so happy to be part of Easton's continued growth and progress.”

Jim Henkel  
Senior Director of Operations and Client Support, Resident  
EPS Financial, LLC





**Thank you to our partners:**  
**Greater Easton Development Partnership**  
**Easton Main Street Initiative**  
*A Program of the Greater Easton Development Partnership*  
**Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce**  
**Easton Business Association**  
**West Ward Neighborhood Partnership**  
**College Hill Neighborhood Association**  
**South Side Civic Association**

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**Photography By:**  
**Liz Wyant (Signology)**  
[www.signology.us](http://www.signology.us)

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**Thank you to our generous sponsors:**





# City of Easton

## Business Pre-Opening/Expansion Checklist

Interested in opening a business in Easton? Fantastic! This guide will help to walk you through the procedures (such as zoning, licensing, inspections, etc.) required by the City before your grand opening. As you go through each of these steps, you'll have a clearer indication of your progress, and know what remaining actions you'll need to take to transform your Easton business from a dream into a reality. Let's get started!

### GETTING STARTED!

These first few steps lay some of the groundwork for starting a new business in Easton. If your business already exists, and you're looking to relocate or open a branch in the City, you've likely completed many of these items already.

1. I have defined my business in a business plan or other formal document.  Yes  Partially \_\_\_\_\_ Date Last Updated
2. I have determined and established my business's legal entity. (e.g. corporation, partnership, sole proprietor, tax identification, etc.)  Yes  Partially  N/A
3. I have investigated sites in Easton to locate my business and have chosen: \_\_\_\_\_  Yes  Partially  N/A

Address \_\_\_\_\_

### CHARTING THE PATH FORWARD...

4. Now that you've established the character of your business, and scouted a location, it's time to discuss your plans with the City staff. The best way to do this is through a Technical Review. These informal meetings give you an opportunity to discuss your proposal with staff from the City's various departments and bureaus. Long before you ever open, this will give you a clear sense of the costs, requirements and a rough timeline required before you're able to be in business. To schedule a Technical Review call: **(610) 250-6721**.

Scheduled Technical Review(s)
_____ Date _____ Time _____
_____ Date _____ Time _____

### HOW WILL ZONING AFFECT ME?

Regardless of the nature of your proposal, you'll need to file for zoning. This process varies depending upon the proposal, and where you'd like to locate your business. At the technical review, you'll want to find out:

5. My proposed use is in the following zoning district(s):

Base District:			Overlay District(s):
<input type="checkbox"/> College Hill	<input type="checkbox"/> River Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/> Expressway Transitional	<input type="checkbox"/> Street Corridor
<input type="checkbox"/> Downtown	<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptive Reuse	<input type="checkbox"/> College Hill Institutional Transitional	<input type="checkbox"/> Innovation
<input type="checkbox"/> South Side	<input type="checkbox"/> Institutional 1	<input type="checkbox"/> West Ward Institutional Transitional	<input type="checkbox"/> Flood Hazard
<input type="checkbox"/> West Ward	<input type="checkbox"/> Institutional 2		<input type="checkbox"/> Steep Slopes

6. As I've presented it in the Technical Review, my proposal involves the following uses:

Permitted  Special Exception  Not Permitted

Use Code \_\_\_\_\_ Use Name \_\_\_\_\_

Permitted  Special Exception  Not Permitted

Use Code \_\_\_\_\_ Use Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** This form is neither a legal zoning determination nor a zoning approval. This is merely a guide to help you track your progress. Additional zoning requirements (parking, signs, etc.) not included here may also apply. These will be determined when your plan is past the conceptual stage. Actual legal determinations can only be made by the Zoning Administrator and/or Zoning Hearing Board upon review of a formal zoning submission with fee payment. Of course, as your plans develop, staff will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

**This worksheet is only to serve as a guide. It is not an official document in determining approval status.**

## PURCHASING/LEASING YOUR BUSINESS LOCATION...

If you haven't already, you'll need to purchase or lease your business location. If permits and/or approvals are pending, you may want to condition any sale or lease upon their receipt. Having the following information handy will help:

7. Have you purchased or leased the business location?  Purchased  Leased

Real Estate Agent / Landlord	(        ) -	<input type="checkbox"/> Met <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
	Telephone	Sale/Lease Conditions	
Mortgage/Rental Payment Address	\$ Monthly Amount	Payment Day	Move-In Date
Lender	(        ) -	Telephone	Contact Name

## DESIGNING YOUR BUSINESS...

If you're making alterations to building or property for your business, you may be required to hire a design professional.

- 8.
- |                   |         |         |              |
|-------------------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Design Consultant | Company | Address | (        ) - |
|                   |         |         | Telephone    |
| Contractor        | Company | Address | (        ) - |
|                   |         |         | Telephone    |

## GETTING YOUR PLACE READY FOR BUSINESS...

You've gotten your plans together, and you're ready to begin the process of permitting and review! This will help you track your submissions and approvals. This list is generalized: your project may not require each item listed, and/or may require additional items not on this form. If you have any questions, call the Department of Planning & Codes at **(610) 250-6724**.

9. Zoning  Submitted  Fees Paid  Approved  N/A
- Planning  Submitted  Fees Paid  Approved  N/A
- Historic District Commission  Submitted  Fees Paid  Approved  N/A
- |            |  |             |  |  |
|------------|--|-------------|--|--|
| Building   | <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | Health      | <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> N/A |
| Electrical | <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | Other  |
| Plumbing   | <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | Fire        | <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | Other  |
| Mechanical | <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | Traffic     | <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | Other  |

## THE FINAL STEPS BEFORE OPENING...

You're almost there! These final steps are all that stands between you and opening. Prior to opening, you'll need:

10. A certified waste hauler  Acquired  Hauler Name  Trash Removal Day(s)
- A valid Certificate of Occupancy  Acquired  Permit Number  Issue Date
- A valid City business license  Acquired  License Number  Issue Date

## TIME TO OPEN!

**Congratulations!** Your business is ready to open! We officially welcome you to the dynamic business community that is Easton and wish you every success in your endeavor. We can't wait for you to add to the rich commerce of our City!

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