

Your Guide To Business Success In Easton



Letter From the Mayor

Dear Business Owner,

Looking to establish your business or considering opening a second location for a growing enterprise? The City of Easton is ready for you.

Location is key to business success. This guide will show you how Easton is poised to help take your idea to the next level. Discover the resources, amenities and infrastructure that Easton can offer your growing business.

Our walkable, bike-friendly downtown and collaborative business community affords many opportunities for both start-ups and companies on the brink of expansion. Our business community is defined by national and global brands, and small, independent businesses. They have made their home in Easton — not just because of its location or amenities, but because of the quality of life it offers. Our historic, riverside city of approximately 28,000 is built on food, art and tourism.

Easton made its mark in history as the site of the Easton Farmers' Market (America's oldest, continuous open-air farmers' market) and as one of only three spots where the Declaration of Independence was first read aloud to the public in 1776. From the moment the Declaration of Independence was read, the city has embraced the principles of freedom. Easton is a place where pioneering thoughts and diverse beliefs are welcome; where your uniqueness is an asset to yourself and the city. Easton's spirit of independence makes it a magnet for entrepreneurs, free thinkers, artists, non-conformists and anyone looking to bring their dreams to life in word and action.

Easton has seen many changes in its years. Today our neighborhoods boast over 75 restaurants, art galleries, museums and boutiques. We welcome visitors to Easton with festivals throughout the year, including Easton Garlic Fest, Heritage Day, VegFest, Lebanese Heritage Days and the two-day PA Bacon Fest (which draws thousands of visitors from up and down the East Coast). In 2020, the Easton Winter Village launched — which included a skating rink and 20 outdoor artisan huts, on weekends from November to December — offering a new chance to celebrate.

Throughout the year, more than 400,000 people visit The Crayola Experience to learn how crayons are made. Others take in a show at the historic State Theatre, cheer on their teams at Lafayette College, or reconnect with nature through the 165-mile D&L Trail, and 1.6-mile Karl Stirner Arts Trail, which doubles as an outdoor art museum. They enjoy a diverse selection of delicious food and hand-crafted sweets at the Easton Public Market or dine at one of the city's restaurants and cafes.

I welcome you to explore the City of Easton and bring your energy and passion to our business community. Learn more about how our city can bring your ideas to life in this guide, and reach out to me with any questions. I'm happy to help you find the right spot to grow your business.

Salvatore J. Panto

Sal Panto, Mayor
spanto@easton-pa.gov



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We're Ready To Help You Succeed!

With the help of this guide and the professionals in Easton, you will:

- Understand the basic steps to plan and open your business.
- Understand the general licensing and permitting requirements for your business.
- Learn more about Easton and its collaborative business community.
- Manage the business development process so you open quickly and efficiently.
- Know who you can contact for assistance.

A Vibrant Hometown

“We have a long history in the Lehigh Valley, and our Easton home base – with its custom-built test facilities – perfectly serves our journalism needs. And Easton’s easy access to abundant and beautiful roads, paths, trails, and forests mean we can take our testing (and fun) into real-world situations like never before. I’ve come to love my new hometown, its community, its leaders, its vision, and — last but certainly not least for me — the cycling and running cultures here that grow ever more vibrant.”

Bill Strickland

*Bicycling’s Rider-In-Chief and
Editorial Director of The Hearst Enthusiast Group*



“When the Team at Aman’s was looking to grow our restaurant from the suburbs, Downtown Easton was the most logical and potential-filled option for us. The city’s historic charm, vibrant culinary scene, small business retail diversity, and proximity to major cities was attractive. What made Easton stand out was that it is an existing tourist destination, with an actively involved Main Street Initiative program with a community outreach team that genuinely cares about you as a small business. There is a great sense of community and pride here. Our business is now more visible and prominent. We have expanded and grown since making the move to downtown Easton and the future looks bright with all the residential and business development the city is planning.”

— **Baljeet Bansal**

Owner, Aman’s Artisan Indian Cuisine

A Perfect Location

Since 1752

The City of 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.

In 1752, Easton Farmers’ Market was established and continues today as America’s oldest, continuous, open-air market. In 1776, Easton was chosen as one of three cities where the Declaration of Independence was read aloud.

In the 19th century, Easton flourished as a major commercial and industrial center thanks to our rivers and canals and proximity to Philly and New York City. The city became home to wire and silk mills, foundries, and was a transportation epicenter for raw materials from the north and west, as well as manufactured goods.

In 1832, Easton was elevated to a cultural center with the founding of Lafayette College by citizens of the community. Learn about the city’s history by visiting the Sigal Museum and the National Canal Museum.

Today Easton is one of the three core cities in the Lehigh Valley, with a downtown center that boasts three hotels and a bus station for easy accessibility. Our proximity to major metropolitan markets in the Northeast, and a business-friendly, walkable downtown make the City of Easton a prime choice to start or grow your business.



Independent at Heart, and Amazingly Connected

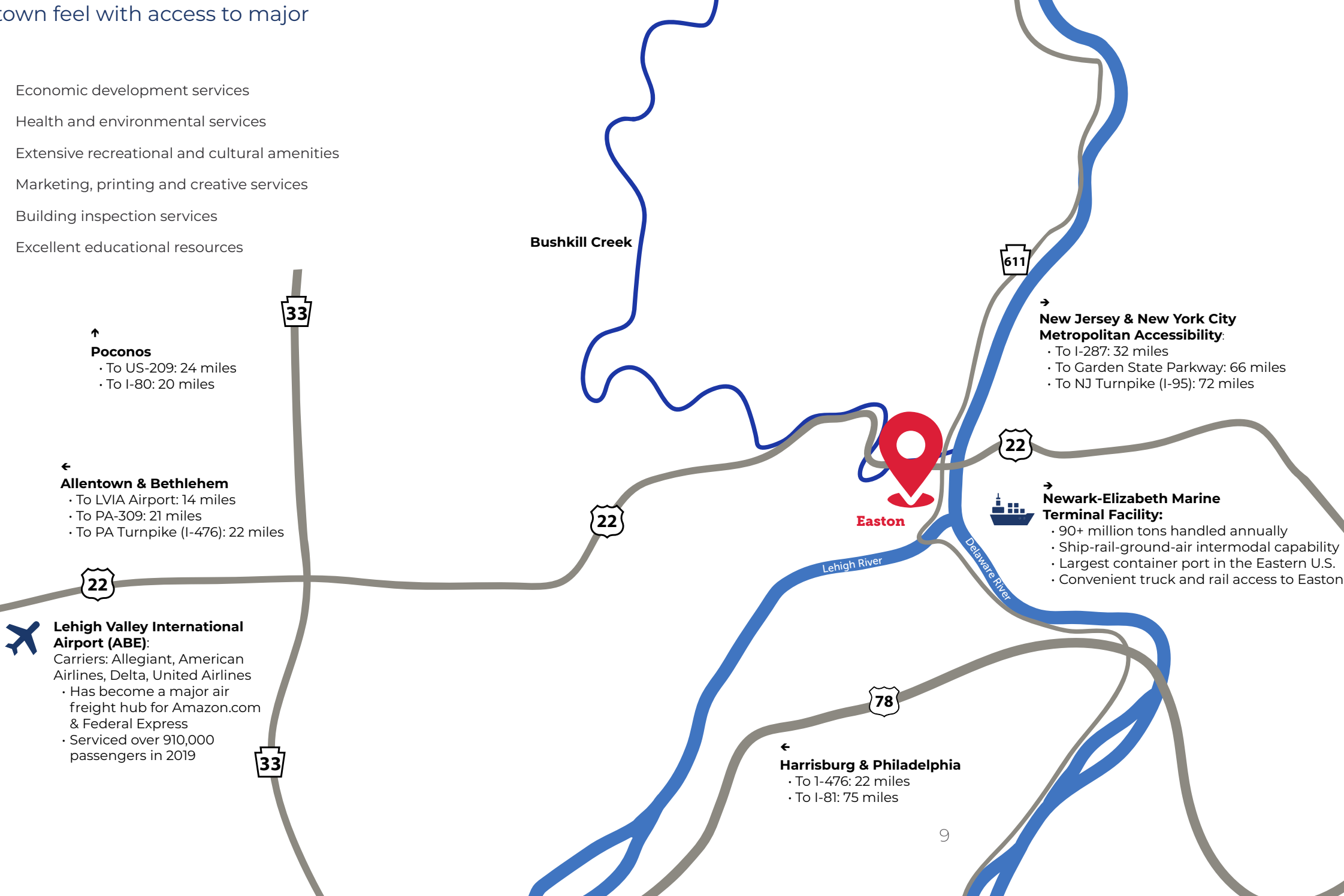
Easton is a walkable and progressive city in the growing Lehigh Valley region, boasting exceptional access to both the natural environment and transportation networks, historic character, diverse housing options and a ready workforce. Easton's attributes are as critical to the city's success as they are to you. Learn how Easton offers a small-town feel with access to major metropolitan areas.

- Easton offers unparalleled 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
- Marketing, printing and creative services
- Building inspection services
- Excellent educational resources



Free Bridge

Noted as “combining aesthetics with economical design”, the bridge connecting downtown Easton to Phillipburg, NJ, was designated a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers and commemorated in 1995.



A Collaborative Business Community Where New Ideas are Welcome

Choosing the right location for your business is crucial for its success. Easton offers a walkable, riverfront downtown location that is welcoming to visitors as well as residents. Business owners within Easton are quick to collaborate on products and supply chain. They come together for festivals, events and cooperative ventures.

Want to know more about the city you may call home? Want to network and meet your fellow independent entrepreneurs before you flip that open sign?

Contact one of these organizations to learn more ➔

Greater Easton Development Partnership (GEDP)

eastonpartnership.org | 610-250-2078

GEDP oversees Easton Main Street Initiative, Easton Farmers' Market, Easton Public Market, Easton Out Loud (a fourth Friday business promotion), PA Bacon Fest, Live at the Falls, Heritage Day, Easton Ambassadors, West Ward Community Initiative, Easton Murals, Easton Garden Works, Easton Composting Program and many other programs. GEDP offers financial assistance, guidance and support to Easton businesses.

Easton Main Street Initiative (EMSI)

eastonmainstreet.org | 610-330-9940

This nonprofit program is part of the Greater Easton Development Partnership (GEDP) and focuses on Downtown Easton. EMSI hosts quarterly Business Owner Roundtables, prints a quarterly Business Bugler newsletter, and sends periodic Business E-Updates and texts. Contact them for free site selection assistance, and to get connected with the community. EMSI updates an annual Easton Map & Guide and downtown directional signage; manages the Downtown Easton gift card program; connects the business community to Lafayette College and its stakeholders; coordinates a holiday decorating program; and promotes Easton events to 10,000+ email subscribers.

Easton Business Association (EBA)

eastonbusinessassociation.org

This free, volunteer-led business resource group offers regular networking opportunities and mixers, ribbon cuttings and workshops to connect with fellow business owners in Downtown Easton, West Ward, College Hill and South Side.

Easton Area Chamber of Commerce (EACC)

info@lehighvalleychamber.org

The Easton Area Chamber of Commerce is a proud part of the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber's mission is to improve the economy and quality of life in the Lehigh Valley. Serving more than 5,000 businesses and members, the Chamber is the largest in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and top six nationwide. It offers networking and marketing opportunities, visibility within five counties, ribbon cuttings and celebratory events, pro-business public policy advocacy, and exclusive member to member cost savings programs.

Easton Ambassadors

610-496-3857

The Easton Ambassadors are a clean, green and safe team that monitors 45 blocks in Downtown Easton and the West Ward. The red-shirted Ambassadors can be found in any weather providing cleaning services, refilling and maintaining planters, offering hospitality assistance for visitors, and supporting the community.



Business Startup Checklist

Follow These Helpful Steps to Start your Business in Easton

1. Prepare a Business Plan

A business plan will help you identify resources, prioritize them and determine the best route 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, sbdc.lehigh.edu, **610-758-3980**
- SCORE, a nonprofit group that offers free advice and workshops, and provides mentors to entrepreneurs, score.org.

2. 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:

- PA Business One-Stop-Shop | business.pa.gov/register
- The Express Times newspaper | **610-258-7171** | lehighvalleylive.com
- The Morning Call newspaper | **610-820-6565** | mcall.com

3. 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 irs.gov or by calling **610-865-8208**.

4. Select Your Site

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:

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- The Morning Call newspaper | **610-820-6565** | mcall.com

5. Identify & Secure Funding

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, easton-pa.com/community-economic-development | **610-250-6719**
- Rising Tide Community Loan Fund, therisingtide.org | **484-893-1039**
- Small Business Development Center, Lehigh University, sbdc.lehigh.edu | **610-758-3980**
- Small Business Loan Program, Greater Easton Development Partnership | **610-250-2078**

6. 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 revenue.pa.gov 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 dli.pa.gov or **800-482-2383**.

7. 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**.

8. Obtain Easton Approvals

Once you have established a basic business plan, you will need to go through the zoning, 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. For city permits, licenses, and other online city services, visit eastonpa.viewpointcloud.com. (See page 16 for more information.)

9. Hire Your Team!

Once your paperwork is in, site selected and getting closer to opening, you'll need to start building your team to bring your dream to reality. Use this regional resource to help you find and train your employees:

- PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley, careerlinklehighvalley.org | **610-829-6099**.



Year-Round Excitement

Weekly events, festivals and happenings bring thousands to our city and create a sense of place and belonging.



PA Bacon Fest

You love bacon and you know it. Just come... the rest will work itself out.



Easton Twilight Criterium

Don't miss top professional bike racers fly through the streets of Easton and finish the evening with a fireworks display.

Easton Farmers' Market

Established in 1752, the Easton Farmers' Market is the oldest, continuous open-air market in the nation.



Heritage Day

A free, family festival showcasing local history and heritage with reenactment events, kids' activities, musical performances and fireworks.



Easton Winter Village

Shop at charming huts selling local merchandise, goodies, treats and warm drinks. Take a twirl on the skating rink, and walk under the twinkling lights of the Peace Candle and Centre Square.



Easton Out Loud

Easton turns up the volume in a monthly series of activities every fourth Friday in Downtown Easton with music, food, drinks, games and activities for the whole family.





Easton Approvals

Department of Planning & Codes

610-250-6724

Planning & Codes is the office where subdivision, land development, zoning, building code, and historic review occurs. Before signing a lease or purchasing property, it is prudent to 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. When calling, a clerk will be able to answer some general questions but will direct you to another person for more specific inquiries. 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 help coordinate any reviews by other city departments. Many times, a “TECH Review” is a great way to discuss projects. These meetings allow the different departments to meet with an applicant and go over requirements and answer questions.

Zoning

610-250-6724

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 your proposal is not compliant with 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 for appeals.

Subdivision and 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 planning a Special Exception Use, which are uses that require additional review for potential impacts on the area, or if you are substantially overhauling an existing building, building a new building, or creating new or combining lots. Detailed plans prepared by a Pennsylvania-licensed design professional are required for developments and subdivisions. 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

In the Downtown Historic District only, when you apply for a sign or work to the exterior of your building, a recommendation from the Historic District Commission (HDC) and approval from City Council is required. The HDC makes a recommendation to City Council and, if approved, a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is provided and you are on to the next step.

Building Codes and Inspections

610-250-6724

If you intend to do any building construction or changes, alterations, repairs, change of use, or demolition you will need building code approval. This approval also extends to fire alert and suppression, electrical, gas, mechanical and plumbing systems. Building code approval requires detailed plans outlining the specifications. The plans and construction documents need to be prepared by a Pennsylvania-licensed design professional of what you intend to do, then 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 will be reviewed for compliance with the Commonwealth's Uniform Construction Code. Fees are required for permitting, and inspections are based on the size and complexity of the work.

When your construction documents are approved, a Code Official will contact you about issuing the construction permits and coordinating inspections. Periodic inspections are typical with all building construction and alteration projects and when your project is complete, a final inspection is conducted to ensure compliance with all city regulations. When your final inspection passes, a Certificate of Occupancy is issued, then you are ready for business! (Unless you need a health inspection, information in the “Health” section.)

Health

610-250-6724

If your business involves food, child or elder care, tattoos, 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

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.

Waste Removal and Recycling

610-250-6680

All businesses are required to secure and maintain a private waste hauler. Businesses are also required to recycle. This must be certified with a written plan provided 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.

Engineering

610-250-6690

Generally, any portion of your business that affects public rights-of-way like new driveways, curbing, 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 and Taxes

610-250-6755

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 city permits, licenses, and other online city services, visit eastonpa.viewpointcloud.com. For similar state requirements, visit business.pa.gov/operate/state-taxes or call **833-722-6778**. pabizonline.com or call toll free at **1-855-722-4924**.



Numbers to Know

Keep this helpful Easton directory on hand for your upcoming business needs

- City of Easton General Information**
610-250-6600 | easton-pa.gov

Building Codes + Inspections
610-250-6724 | codes@easton-pa.gov

Business Licensing + Taxes
610-250-6755 | eastonpa.viewpointcloud.com

Historic District
610-250-6724 | codes@easton-pa.gov

Planning, Subdivision + Land Development
610-250-6724 | planning@easton-pa.gov
- Department of Community + Economic Development**
610-250-6719 | dcled@easton-pa.gov

Engineering
610-250-6690 | publicworks@easton-pa.gov

Health
610-250-6724

Waste Removal and Recycling
610-250-6680 | publicworks@easton-pa.gov

Zoning
610-250-6724 | codes@easton-pa.gov

Stay Informed

Keep yourself in the loop for upcoming information

- E-update: Sign up for GEDP’s weekly e-updates to know about all the events and happenings in Downtown Easton. Learn more at eastonmainstreet.org/newsletter.
- Ask the Bugler: The City’s Customer Service Platform. Text ‘HELLO’ to **877-705-1752**.
- Text Alerts: GEDP also sends text alerts to keep our community informed and promote what’s going on in our city. Text any of the following to **484-845-7080** to get info on our upcoming festivals and events.
 - ‘eastonevents’ to get info on upcoming festivals and events.
 - ‘downtownbiz’ for periodic updates specific to business owners.
 - ‘baconfest’ for alerts only about the annual PA Bacon Fest.
- Message and data rates may apply. You can also opt out at any time by replying ‘STOP’.



A Town of Possibilities

“Easton is the perfect home for our business. It is a community that enthusiastically supports small businesses and the entrepreneurial spirit. The steady growing mix of local neighbors and out of town visitors helped inspire our second location at the Easton Public Market. Easton is a town full of possibilities.”

Ron Morris
Co-Owner, Mercantile Home and Mercantile Outpost

Feeling Welcome

“When I was in the initial planning stages of developing my business plan for smARTivities Showcase, the location was an easy decision! I chose Easton because of the sense of community, support and love of the arts, which are all a part of what we do and encourage. I felt welcome in Easton even before I opened and through the whole start-up process, and that continues today. From the start, Easton Main Street staff have always been supportive and eager to answer any questions, encourage our activities, as well as value my opinions on current business environment topics. One of the benefits EMSI also provides is meetings with business professionals like my SCORE consultant who was a vital part of helping me focus on what my start-up needed. There are many facets to my business and I can say with certainty that Easton is the perfect place for us to be. I am confident that we will continue to have the support and tools we need to grow and succeed.”



April Khalil
Owner smARTivities

Connect with Us

City of Easton

   @cityofeastonpa

Easton Main Street Initiative

 @eastonmainstreet
 @eastonmainst

GEDP

 @eastonpartnership

Easton Farmers’ Market

  @EastonFarmersMarket

Easton Public Market

 @eastonpublicmarket
 @eastonpublicmkt

Easton Ambassadors

 @eastonambassadors

West Ward Community Initiative

 @westwardcommunityinitiative
 @westwardeaston

Easton Business Association

  @EastonBusinessAssociation

Easton Area Chamber of Commerce

 @EastonAreaChamber

Thank You to Our Partners

Greater Easton Development Partnership

Easton Main Street Initiative

City of Easton

Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce

Easton Business Association

West Ward Community Initiative

Current as of June 2022



All About Community

“Easton is all about community and Porters’ Pub has been part of that community for over 30 years. We are a Publick House in the true sense of the word. Participating in Easton’s many outdoor festivals like Garlic Fest, PA Bacon Fest and Heritage Day is a wonderful way for us to connect with our old customers and an opportunity to meet some new ones.”

Larry Porter
Owner, Porters’ Pub & Restaurant

To-Do List

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____



BROUGHT TO YOU BY
CITY OF EASTON & GEDP



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Easton, PA 18042
610-250-6600



Greater Easton Development Partnership
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