



Zoning By-law Amendment Information Guide

A Zoning By-law Amendment (or a Rezoning) is a public planning process utilized by those who want to use or develop their property in a way that is not permitted by the Zoning By-law and may not qualify for a Minor Variance. The proposal must conform to both the Township and District of Muskoka Official Plans, or an Official Plan Amendment(s) will also be required. This means the proposal must align with the permitted uses and development policies in the associated land use designation.

Step 1: Pre-Application Consultation

Pre-Application Consultation is a separate application process where staff review your proposal, confirm the appropriate *Planning Act* application(s), and identify materials, studies, etc., required to form a complete application. More information and the application form are available on our [Planning & Zoning webpage](#).

Step 2: Prepare & Submit Complete Application

Complete the entirety of the application form and provide any additional information staff identified as being required through your Pre-Application Consultation (if applicable). Submit to planning@gbtownship.ca and pay the associated fee. Payment instructions are located at the bottom of the Planning & Zoning webpage. Staff will review your application and within 30 days deem it complete or incomplete. An incomplete application will not be further processed until the missing information is provided to the Township's satisfaction. Once deemed complete, staff will schedule your application onto the next available Planning Council Agenda for a public meeting.

Step 3: Circulation of Notice

In accordance with the *Planning Act*, a Public Meeting must be held. Staff will issue Notice of your application to surrounding property owners and you are also required to post a Notice sign on the subject lands. Depending on your lot type, you may be required to post more than 1 sign. Staff will provide you with the notice sign template and Posting Notice Guideline with instructions, as you will need to retain a third-party to prepare the sign(s) in accordance with the guide.

Step 4: Public Meeting

You may attend the meeting in Council Chambers or online via Zoom, for which a link to attend the meeting will be provided to you. A Township Planner will present an overview of your application. The Mayor will then provide you or your agent the opportunity to add additional information or make a presentation. Any person having an interest in your application will be given the opportunity to make their views known. Council may ask questions of the applicant and/or members of the public. A decision will not be made by Council during the Public Meeting.

Step 5: Decision & Appeal Period

Once the Public Meeting has concluded, Planning Council can make a decision to approve or deny your application. Staff will issue a Notice of Passing to the applicant and anybody who provided comments. The *Planning Act* provides for a 20-day appeal period following the issuance of the Notice. If no appeal is filed, Council's decision is final and binding.

Do I need a professional to act on my behalf?

Depending on the complexity of your application, you may wish to retain a Registered Professional Planner (RPP) or other knowledgeable representative to act on your behalf. The Ontario Professional Planners Institute provides a "Consultants Directory" to help you find a skilled RPP to meet your needs: <https://ontarioplanners.ca/consultants-directory>. If you are unsure, the Planning Department is happy to provide their input. If you require additional consultants (i.e., Environmentalist), please utilize our Consultant Resource List available on the Planning & Zoning webpage.

What if Council denies my application?

In accordance with Section 34 of the Planning Act, you can appeal the decision and/or conditions to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT). The last day for filing an appeal will be identified on the Notice of Passing. A "Notice of Appeal" may be filed with the Clerk of the Township of Georgian Bay or via the Ontario Land Tribunal e-file service (first-time users will need to register for a My Ontario Account) at <https://olt.gov.on.ca/e-file-service> by selecting Township of Georgian Bay as the Approval Authority or by mail. The appeal must set out the reasons for the appeal and be accompanied by the fee required by the Ontario Land Tribunal payable to the Minister of Finance.

Additional Information:

- Planning Council meets once per month and the schedule is available on our [Agendas and Minutes webpage](#).
- The application fee is non-refundable. Refer to the User Fees & Charges By-law.
- You may wish to consult with and notify neighbouring property owners well in advance of the Public Meeting.
- It is beneficial (especially during periods of hazardous access conditions) to provide staff with site photos in case staff or members of Council are unable to conduct a site visit.
- Notice sign(s) can be removed from your property after the appeal period.