

Doing Business in Park Ridge

**A Guide to Opening and Operating Your Business
in Park Ridge, Illinois**

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Introduction to Park Ridge

Welcome to Park Ridge. We are excited you are considering to locate your business here! Park Ridge is a vibrant, historic, inner-ring, northwestern suburb of Chicago. The City is comprised of approximately 39,000 residents and several business districts. The Community Preservation and Development Department should be among your first stops in starting a new business in Park Ridge. We are located at City Hall, 505 Butler Place on the second floor. Our staff offers services to assist you through the entire process of opening your business and making sure you have the right information along the way. We want to help ensure your business is a success.

The Community Preservation and Development Department can serve as your central point of entry at City Hall and help guide you through the various processes in opening a business. Services provided by the Community Preservation and Development Department include:

- Assistance finding the ideal location for your business
- Guidance on zoning requirements
- Guidance on the building permit and inspection processes
- Guidance on food establishment regulations and inspections
- Assistance with business licensing and other regulatory requirements

Contact the Planning Division at jbranham@parkridge.us or at (847) 318-5203.

Getting Started

The City of Park Ridge does not offer direct financial assistance to businesses, but there are several resources available for such assistance and guidance. Start with the Illinois Small Business Services Division and Score to find out more about possible grants, loans, or other financial assistance.

Site/Space Selection

We know one of your most important decisions is where to locate your new business. Based on your desired customer demographics, traffic patterns and delivery and pick up requirements, the right location can be the difference between success and failure. So your location must be chosen carefully. And our team is here to help.

City of Park Ridge staff can help you identify a location and work with you and property owners. For information on available commercial properties call 847.318.5203 or 847-318-5296.

Commercial Real Estate Brokers

The CP&D staff can also put you in touch with several local brokers specializing in commercial real estate.

GIS

Another great tool is the Geographical Information System (GIS) link that allows you to research property information on your own via an interactive web-based mapping system. You can easily find

out zoning district, property size, and other items by searching via address or simply navigating around the map on your own (see Map Office Link - GIS): <http://www.parkridge.us/about/maps.aspx>

Demographics

The City's demographic profile is available here for detailed information that could help you understand the City further. <http://www.parkridge.us/about/facts.aspx>

Zoning Regulations

Zoning designation is crucial when you are choosing a location for your business. The City of Park Ridge Zoning Ordinance contains many types of regulations important for new businesses to consider: the specific types of uses that are allowed in various business districts; off-street parking requirements; allowances for signage. Our City zoning staff can help you understand all applicable regulations before you begin your search for a location or apply for permits or licenses.

So before you sign a lease or even install a business sign, be sure to contact the Community Preservation & Development Department, which has responsibility for zoning administration.

Zoning Districts

The City has a number of different zoning business districts:

- O – Office District
- B-1 – Retail & Office District
- B-2 – General Commercial District
- B-3 – General Commercial Wholesale & Service District
- B-4 – Uptown Business District (with four sub-districts)

Home occupations are allowed, with restrictions, in all residential districts (see additional information on next page).

You can learn about each district, its purpose, and the allowable uses in Section 8 of the Zoning Ordinance, link here: https://library.municode.com/il/park_ridge

Special Use

Sometimes a use is listed as a “special” use and not a permitted use in a zoning district. This means additional review is required to ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood and certain criteria are met. Special use consideration is determined by the Planning & Zoning Commission and the City Council. You can review whether the proposed use requires a special use in the business district use chart located in Section 8.3, Table 4 of the Zoning Ordinance.

https://library.municode.com/il/park_ridge

Variance

A variance is required when something you are proposing does not meet zoning ordinance requirements. A hardship must be proven to achieve the granting of a variance and is determined by the Zoning Board of Appeals and City Council. More information can be found here:

http://www.parkridge.us/assets/1/Documents/ZBA_variance_guide_07.pdf

Parking

Parking standards differ for each use. For example, a retail business requires three parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of gross floor area. Be sure to verify the parking requirements for your

use before getting started in Section 12.13, Table 9 of the Zoning Ordinance.
https://library.municode.com/il/park_ridge

Appearance Commission

The Appearance Commission is a design review board which uses Urban Design Guidelines to ensure that new construction and additions affecting front elevations are appropriate and sensitive. The Commission meets once per month. If you are proposing a new building or alterations which affect the front of the building, Appearance Commission approval will be required before you can begin. Additional information regarding the Appearance Commission process and meeting schedule can be found here: http://www.parkridge.us/government/committees_commissions_and_boards.aspx

Site Plan Review / Planned Developments

If you are planning a larger new construction project, Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council approval will be required. Please contact the Planning Division for detailed information about the type of project you are proposing and the necessary process.

Business License

Business licenses are required for all businesses in Park Ridge and must be renewed annually. The CP&D handles all business license requests. The business license application form can be found at: <http://www.parkridge.us/assets/1/Documents/BusinessLicenseForm.pdf>

The following CP&D personnel will be able to assist you with additional concerns regarding business licensing requirements:

- Jon Branham, Senior Planner, (847) 318-5203, jbranham@parkridge.us
- Tim Schwarz, Environmental Health Officer, (847) 318-5468, tschwarz@parkridge.us
- Bernadeta Madryzk, Environmental Health Officer, (847) 318-5459, bmadryzk@parkridge.us

Food Establishment

If you intend to serve food at your business, please review with CP&D's Environmental Health Division. Additional requirements are available for outdoor seating areas as well. For further information contact one of the two environmental health officers listed immediately above.

Liquor License

If you intend to serve alcohol on premises of your business, please refer to the Liquor License application and requirements. Our Administration Department handles all liquor license applications. This department can be reached at (847) 318-5464.

Home Occupation

If you are planning to operate a business within your home, please refer to the home occupation requirements in Section 11.4.H. of the Zoning Ordinance. Generally, you may operate a business from your home provided: all operations are indoors; the operations do not generate noise, illumination, vibrations, smoke, etc. beyond what is normally found in residential areas; the generation of parking, deliveries and visitors remains minimal. For more information, see: https://library.municode.com/il/park_ridge

Note that business licenses are required for home occupations. See above for contact information.

Building Permits

A building permit is generally required for most construction, including new building construction and additions, garages, interior and exterior alterations, driveways, heating and air conditioning work, electrical and plumbing work, swimming pools, fences, patios, decks, sheds, re-roofing and siding. Routine maintenance that does not change existing electrical, plumbing or mechanical system or any structural walls **will not** require a permit. No permit is needed to change windows unless the window opening is being enlarged. Re-shingling a roof does not require a permit. Remember, a permit is there for your protection to ensure work is done according to applicable codes. For additional information regarding building permits, see:

http://www.parkridge.us/living_in_park_ridge/building_permits.aspx

For the building permit application, see:

<http://www.parkridge.us/assets/1/Documents/Permit%20Application%202010.pdf>

Certificate of Occupancy

If you need to remodel your new business space, you will need a Certificate of Occupancy as well. This is normally the final step in the building permitting process. For new businesses that will require a certificate of occupancy, current policy is not to issue the business license until the occupancy certificate is ready for issuance too.