

Adopt-A-Lot Zoning Guidance

While the Open Space Specialist will review your site plan to ensure all planned improvements are permitted by the program, you will still need to obtain relevant zoning and permitting approvals. To improve program accessibility and project feasibility for Adopt-A-Lot stewards, zoning fees are waived along with the requirement for stamped architectural and engineering drawings or site plans. Your hand drawn site plans will do as long as they are to scale and depict all of the elements you are hoping to incorporate, with labels.

Many of the approved elements require a Building & Development Application which can be submitted at [OneStopPGH](#). Some elements may require a Variance, which involves going to Planning Commission for special approval. This process can take two to three months. More information on the Variance process can be found [here](#).

Prohibited Elements

- Art
- Fire Pits/Barbecue Grills/Pizza Ovens
- Memorials of any kind (to persons, and/or ideals)
- Play Equipment
- Concrete Slabs or Footings
- Signs
- Stages/Performance Platforms

Permitted Elements

Raised Beds

- Depending on the soil quality, raised beds may be required.
- 3 ft setback from property lines required.
- 2 ft minimum spacing between beds required.
- No permit required.
- Raised beds and temporary fences are the only elements permitted on Adopt-A-Lot sites with license agreements.

Fencing

Fencing is a common element to define lot borders and an important component of most vacant lot projects. Common types include: picket, split rail, wire mesh, chain link, or deer fencing. Allowable fence heights are determined by what zoning district the lot is located in and the fence's proximity to the street and property lines.

- Street facing fences inside of front setbacks outlined above can be no taller than 4 ft.
- Fences that abide by required front setbacks may be up to 6 ft tall. The exception to this is fences in General Industrial Districts (GI), where they may be up to 6 ft tall for both front yards and side yards.

For Adopt-A-Lot License Agreements:

Temporary wire mesh fence material with metal or wood stakes that can easily be driven into the ground with a hammer can keep little critters, such as rabbits, squirrels, and groundhogs out of your garden.

- Wire mesh fencing cannot exceed 42 inches in height.
- Plastic construction fencing is prohibited.
- Temporary wire mesh is the only fencing type permitted for license agreements.
- Must be removed in the winter.
- No Building & Development Application is necessary.

For Adopt-A-Lot Lease Agreements:

See the zoning code for fence standards to understand height minimums and setback requirements: <https://ecode360.com/45477851>

- Building & Development Application is necessary.
- Fence height may be raised by 1 ft from height minimum with Administrator Exception. Submit the BDA to get the process started.
- Fence height greater than 1 ft. from the zoning code will require a variance.
- Deer fencing, which can be at least 7 feet tall, may be able to be installed around the “backyard” area with an Administrator’s Exception. To install this around the entire border of the property, you will need to obtain a Variance.
- Barbed /razor wire fences are not permitted.

Market Stands

- Submit a Building & Development Application.
- Market stand structures for agricultural purposes can be placed in any zoning district.

Sheds and Shade Structures

- Submit a Building & Development Application.
- See the zoning code for setback requirements.

Trellises and Cold Frames

- Submit a Building & Development Application.
- See the zoning code for setback requirements.
- 8 ft maximum height.

Hoop Houses and High Tunnels

- Submit a Building & Development Application.
- See the zoning code for setback requirements.

Chickens and Ducks

Accessory Use (leaseholder lives/works on the property or directly adjacent to it)

- Submit a Building & Development Application.

- Lot size must be at least 2,000 sq. ft. If the lot size is smaller, then you must apply for a Variance.
- Up to 5 chickens or ducks are permitted.
- For every additional 1,000 sq. ft, an additional chicken or duck is permitted.
- Any structures housing these animals must be at least 50 ft from the property line to abide by setback requirements.

Primary Use (leaseholder does not live/work on or adjacent to the property)

- Submit a Building & Development Application
- Lot size must be at least two (2) acres. If the lot size is smaller then you must apply for a Variance.

Miniature Goats

- Submit a Building & Development Application.
- Two (2) miniature goats are permitted on lots between 2,000 sq. ft and 10,000 sq. ft. If the lot size is smaller then you must apply for a Variance.
- Lots cannot also have chickens or ducks.

Full-size Goats

- Submit a Building & Development Application
- Two (2) full-size goats are permitted on lots over 10,000 sq. ft. If the lot size is smaller then you must apply for a Variance.

Apiary (for beekeeping)

- Submit a Building & Development Application.
- Lot must be at least 2,000 sq. ft. If the lot size is smaller then you must apply for a Variance.
- Up to two (2) beehives are permitted, and for each additional 2,000 sq. feet, two additional beehives are permitted.
- There must be a flyaway barrier at least 6 ft in height.