



# Site Evaluation Checklist

Site:

## Former uses:

What are the site's former uses?

Was the site ever used in a way that could have contaminated surrounding ground?  Yes  No

## Visibility/traffic/accessibility:

How visible is the site from the street?

Location in plaza or block (Corner, middle)?

Street traffic  High  Medium  Low

On a major artery?  Yes  No

Accessible to highways?  Yes  No

How easy is it to enter the parking lot (turn lane, divided road, etc.)?

What geographic barriers exist (river/railroad/highway)?

## Parking:

Number of spaces for co-op use only: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of shared spaces: \_\_\_\_\_

Distance of parking from entrance: \_\_\_\_\_

Flat lot or parking garage? \_\_\_\_\_

Parking visible from the road?  Yes  No

Store entrance visible from parking area?  Yes  No

## Synergy:

What businesses exist near the site?

What businesses share parking?

## Building characteristics:

What is the total square footage?

How many square feet of space will be usable for retail (sales area)?

What is the electrical service?

Access below the retail area for plumbing and refrigeration lines?

Yes  No

Is there insulation or flooring that may contain asbestos?

Yes  No

What other hazards might need to be corrected?

What kind of outdoor signage is possible? Is there a visible spot for it?

Is there room for semi-trailer deliveries and a loading dock?

Yes  No

Can you move full pallets into the store and through storage areas?

Yes  No

Are the retail and backstock area all on one floor?  Yes  No

Will you be using parts of the building that are not at ground level and ADA accessible? If so, does the building have an elevator?

Yes  No

Shape of building (sketch or describe)

## Other possible factors:

Bikeable/walkable/accessible to public transportation?

Yes  No

Neighborhood characteristics — housing density, safety?

# Analyzing your site – Guidelines for checklist use

## Former uses:

- **Positive former uses** include grocery store or other retail (although it's a good idea to question why they left the site).
- **Negative former uses** include anything likely to contaminate the site (e.g. industrial use, gas station, dry cleaners).

## Visibility/traffic/accessibility:

- **Visibility:** Co-op should not be sandwiched by other uses on top and sides. If it is in a shopping center, it should be on the end and visible from the road. Research indicates most shoppers first become aware of a store by driving or walking by.
- **Street Accessibility:** You should be able to turn into the co-op from either side of the road. Stop signs/lights, turn lanes, and slower speeds all help.
- **Street traffic:** High indicates a major thoroughfare, low would be a neighborhood street.
- **At an intersection:** Site should not be mid-block.
- **Proximity to major arteries:** Nearness to major surface streets and highways determines the size of your trade area.
- **Geographic barriers:** Your market area might be a 15-mile radius around the site in theory, but if there is a major highway, railroad tracks, or river it might as well be the Great Wall of China. Shoppers tend to not cross these geographic barriers.

## Parking:

- **Number of spaces:** You need a minimum of five dedicated parking spaces (spaces for co-op shoppers only) per 1,000 total sq. ft of store. Suburban sites may require eight to ten spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. Even if you have people who say "I'll walk or bike," people overwhelmingly drive to buy groceries.
- **Other parking considerations:** Store entrance should be visible from the parking lot, and parking should be visible from the street. Parking should be within 350 feet of the entrance. Consumers dislike multi-deck parking, especially underground lots.

## Synergy:

- Other retailers that appeal to the same type of consumer are synergistic, e.g. coffee shops, bookstores. Businesses that occupy shared parking for long periods of time are detrimental, e.g. gyms, movie theaters, fine dining.

## Building characteristics:

- **Size:** Remember that only about 65% of your square footage will be retail. In order to have a 3,500 sq. ft. retail area, the minimum for a full-line grocery store, you will need 5,000 – 6,000 sq. ft. total space. Smaller stores are identified by shoppers as "specialty stores". They will subsequently spend from their "specialty food" budget (smaller amount) as opposed to their regular "grocery budget" (larger, consistent weekly amount).
- **Drainage:** Does the space have plumbing for produce and refrigerator sections? Can they be run in an open space below the retail floor? This is costly to retrofit.
- **Hazards:** Buildings constructed pre-1981 may have asbestos in flooring, pipes, or other areas. This is something you can't necessarily know on an initial site visit. Other hazards might include a non-ADA accessible sales floor or structural columns in inconvenient locations. All of these things can be remediated, but add cost.
- **Electrical Service:** You will need high capacity and probably 3-phase service.
- **Delivery Area:** Can a full-size tractor-trailer rig unload without blocking traffic or customers? Is there ample room to get pallets in and out through the back of the building? Shipments shouldn't come through the front door unless you're in a dense urban area. Having a loading dock and/or forklift is one of the considerations included in NCG membership evaluation.
- **Shape of facility:** Roughly rectangular is preferred, without being overly long and narrow. All retail and back stock areas should be on the first floor.

## Other possible factors:

- How many households are near the site? A popular model used in market studies suggests that the closer you are to the store, the more likely you are to shop there. Look for residential density nearby.