



7 Factors to Compare
Before You Commit

THE FOOD FACILITY EXPANSION SCORECARD:





Scaling a food or beverage operation is a high-stakes move — and your choice of location can make or break the investment.

It's not just about cost per square foot. It's about utilities, zoning, workforce, permitting timelines, and post-move support. Yet many food companies make the mistake of committing to sites based on surface-level specs or broker promises... only to discover months (and millions) later that the site wasn't actually ready for what they needed.

This scorecard is your decision-sidekick — a **straightforward way to evaluate and compare food production sites** before you commit your capital, your contracts, and your future.





SCORE EACH SITE
ON A SCALE OF 1–5:

- 1 = RED FLAG (MAJOR RISK)
- 5 = FULLY ALIGNED AND READY
TO SUPPORT YOUR GROWTH

USE THIS TO COMPARE MULTIPLE
LOCATIONS HEAD-TO-HEAD.



01

UTILITY READINESS

Can the site actually support the infrastructure demands of food production — especially cold storage, wastewater handling, and 3-phase power?

- Electrical capacity is verified and sufficient
- Water pressure and volume are food-industry appropriate
- Wastewater systems are compliant and expandable
- Broadband and backup systems meet operational needs

SCORE: _____



02

ZONING & REGULATORY FIT

Is the site zoned for food manufacturing, and does it allow the kind of production you're planning (e.g., wet processing, packaging, distribution)?

- Proper zoning is confirmed — not "in process"
- No conflicting or outdated local ordinances
- Food-grade production is explicitly allowed

Local officials are familiar with food facility requirements

SCORE: _____



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03

COLD STORAGE COMPATIBILITY

Is the site suitable for current or future cold storage infrastructure?

- Space/layout supports cold storage or freezer buildout
- No restrictions on refrigeration, exhaust, or noise levels
- Utility grid can handle additional refrigeration load
- Environmental controls can be implemented easily

SCORE: _____

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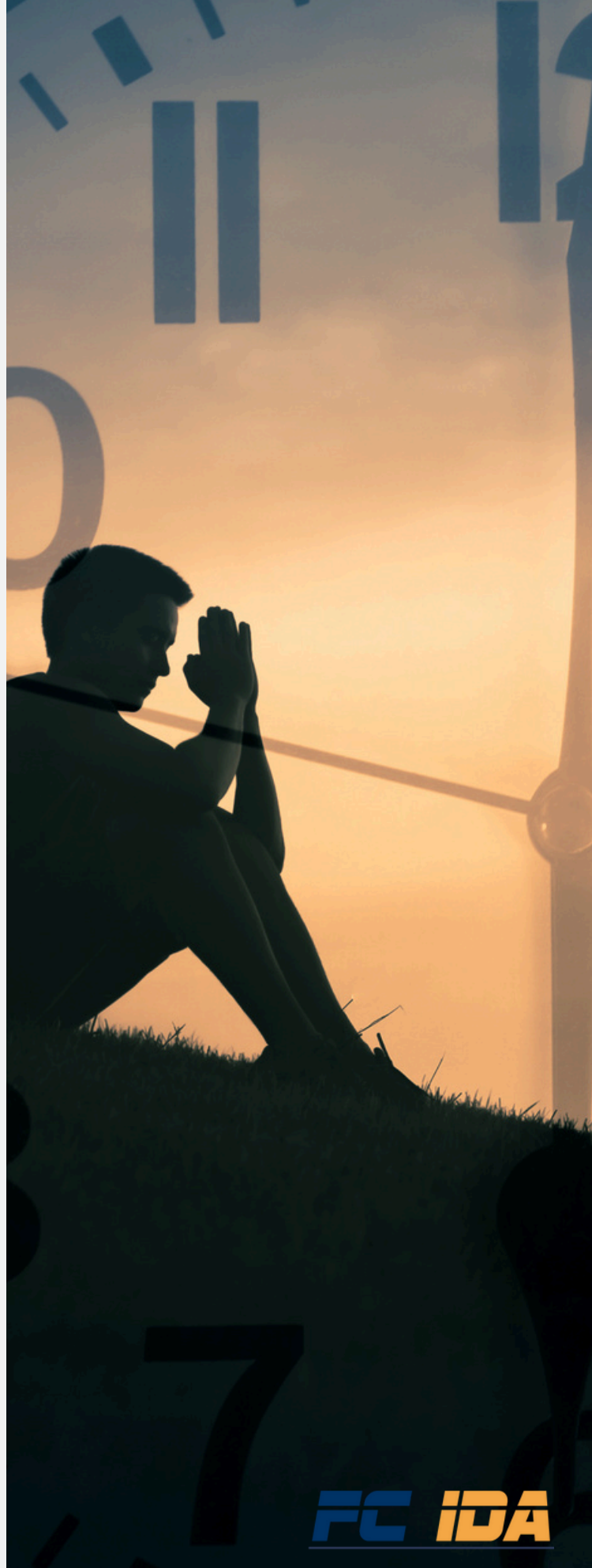
04

PERMITTING TIMELINE CERTAINTY

How predictable and coordinated is the local permitting process?

- Permitting timelines are documented and consistent
- A single point-of-contact coordinates agencies
- Past projects met (or beat) expected permitting durations
- Timeline aligns with your go-live or production needs

SCORE: _____



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05

INCENTIVE TRANSPARENCY & USABILITY

Are the financial incentives clear, usable, and actually impactful to your bottom line?

- Incentives are published, structured, and performance-based
- Local agency can show past examples of deals delivered
- Process to access incentives is clear and supported
- Incentives align with your capital stack or financing needs

SCORE: _____



06

LABOR AVAILABILITY & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

*Is there a reliable talent pool —
and support to train or upskill as
needed?*

- Availability of food production labor is documented
- Partnerships with local colleges or training programs exist
- Food safety certifications or pipelines can be created
- Willingness to co-design training for your specific needs

SCORE: _____



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07

POST-MOVE SUPPORT ECOSYSTEM

Does the region offer ongoing support — or will you be on your own after ribbon-cutting?

- *Local agency offers onboarding or community integration*
- *Utility coordination, vendor introductions, and support continue post-approval*
- *There's a network of food-friendly contractors, suppliers, and service providers*
- *The region wants long-term growth, not just short-term wins*

SCORE: _____



SCORECARD

Factor	Score
Utility Readiness	
Zoning & Regulatory Fit	
Cold Storage Compatibility	
Zoning & Regulatory Fit	
Permitting Timeline Certainty	
Incentive Transparency & Usability	
Labor Availability & Workforce Development	
Post-Move Support Ecosystem	
Total	

Total Score: _____ / 35

31–35 = High Confidence

— Region is built to support food manufacturing success

25–30 = Caution Zone

— Clarify or negotiate key risk areas

<25 = Proceed Carefully

— Gaps in readiness, support, or infrastructure may increase costs and risks



Want to Compare Fulton County?

We'd love to walk you through how our shovel-ready food production sites score against this framework — transparently, line by line.

*Request a custom walkthrough
or site comparison at fcida.org.*



518.736.5660

1 East Montgomery Street
Johnstown, NY 12095

www.fcida.org

