



What is a Zoning District?

A Zoning District defines how a property can be used – both the type of use (residential, institutional, commercial, and industrial uses), and the intensity of use. Intensity can be how many dwelling units per acre, size and number of buildings, etc.

What requires a Zoning Permit?

Every building permit is also a zoning permit – Zoning reviews:

- The use of the building or property
- Setback from property lines
- Height
- How much of the lot is covered by buildings (lot coverage)
- Parking
- Other items may be reviewed for commercial and multifamily developments, such as landscaping, design, or “Neighborhood Compatibility” requirements

Also, fences and small accessory buildings (sheds, small garages) may not need a building permit but need a zoning permit.

What does Zoning review when a business wants to locate on a commercial property?

There are several things that Zoning reviews when a business wants to locate on a property:

- In the Zoning District, is the use allowed...
 - “As of right”?
 - Subject to conditions?
 - By Special Exception?
 - Common Special exceptions are liquor stores, convenience stores, pawn shops, residential care facilities, roominghouses, late-night restaurants/bars, or schools or churches located in residential districts
- Is enough parking provided? (if the district requires parking)
- Are there are any use or neighborhood compatibility standards, and are they met?

Can a business be located in a home?

Our Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) permits home day cares (licensed by the state and no more than 6 children), and Home Occupations. The requirements for a Home Occupation are designed so that a residence does not appear to be a business.

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What is a nonconformity?

A nonconformity is a use or characteristic that does not meet the current zoning requirements. A nonconformity is generally allowed to continue until it is abandoned or discontinued.

I noticed a Zoning issue, how do I send in a complaint?

You can use the MyColaSC app (<https://columbiasc.gov/Mycolasc/>), or

- For Zoning concerns: Zoning@ColumbiaSC.gov or 803-545-3333
- For Code Enforcement: <https://columbiapd.net/service-requests/> or 803-545-3430
- For questions about a building permit: DevelopmentCenter@ColumbiaSC.gov or 803-545-3420

How do I find out about what is going on in my neighborhood?

Many projects are “as of right”, and if the applicant meets these requirements, a permit is issued without further notification.

However, there are projects that require extra review and sometimes notification. Zoning – and Planning & Development Services – works with several boards and commissions and City Council to complete these reviews. The meetings are open to the public and your input is welcome. You may sign up for our Boards and Agendas mailing list by emailing Madelyn.Bowden@ColumbiaSC.gov to receive a copy of the agenda for each meeting.





How do I participate in Board or Commission meetings?

Specific instructions are printed on the agenda for each board or commission meeting (visit <https://planninganddevelopment.columbiasc.gov/about-land-use-boards-commissions/> to access each agenda), but in general:

- You may write a letter or an email; or
- You may speak in person; or
- both

I saw a sign posted on a property. What does it mean?

We post signs on properties when there is a request that requires review by one of our Boards and Commissions:

 <p><u>Board of Zoning Appeals</u></p> <p>Hearings on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variances • Special Exceptions • Appeals 	 <p><u>Planning Commission</u></p> <p>Makes recommendations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rezoning (including Annexations) • Text Amendments to Unified Development Ordinance <p>Reviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Subdivisions (new streets) • Street name changes <p>The Planning Commission also reviews Major Site Plans, but these are on the agenda only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential above 25 units on one lot • Non-residential above 100,000 sq. ft.
 <p><u>Design/Development Review Commission</u></p> <p>Hearings on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New construction or additions in Historic Districts or Design Overlays • Bailey Bill (tax credit for historic structures) 	 <p><u>Zoning Public Hearing (at City Council)</u></p> <p>Hearings on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rezoning (including Annexations) • Text Amendments to Unified Development Ordinance