



**GUILFORD COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT BULLETIN**

**INFORMATION YOU NEED TO START,
SITE AND CONSTRUCT A BUSINESS
IN GUILFORD COUNTY**

To the Prospective Guilford County Business Owner/Operator

Starting, siting and constructing a business can be a significant challenge. As an owner or operator, you are often confronted with a multitude of complex, critical and sometimes very stressful decisions. This brochure is designed to assist you as you develop or expand your business. We want you to be a success in your venture.

Business Planning

Often times new business owners in their enthusiasm to start a business overlook many things that need to be done. You will save time and money in constructing or renovating your building by scheduling a conference with the Planning and Development staff at the New Guilford County Courthouse at 201 South Eugene Street, Greensboro, N.C. Contact the appropriate planner at (336) 641-3334 and arrange a conference. This conference will be worth your time.

SITING YOUR BUSINESS

Zoning

Land, buildings and structures can only be used in certain ways within each zoning district indicated on the Official Zoning Maps. Buildings and structures can only be erected which are intended or designed to be used for the purpose listed in the Permitted Use Schedule, Table 4-3-1. Contact a planner at (336) 641-3334.

General Requirements (Parking, Setbacks, Height, Density, Lot Size)

Businesses in different types of zones have different parking and loading requirements, building setbacks, height restrictions, density limitations, lot sizes, landscaping requirements, and accessory building requirements. Contact a planner at (336) 641-3334.

Watershed Development

There are eight different drinking water supply watersheds within Guilford County's jurisdiction. Each watershed has special regulations that limit land use and the density of development. For a determination as to how these rules are applicable to your business call the Watershed Protection Engineer at (336) 641-3784 or Civil Engineer at (336) 641-5565.

Landscaping Regulations

Landscaping is required for new buildings and parking lots, as well as for expansion of buildings that involve more than 3,000 square feet.

Sign Requirements

The sign ordinance regulates the type, number, size, height and placement of signs as permit requirements. A detailed, to scale, map of the sign showing the above is required. Also, the exact location(s) of the sign(s) must be shown on the site plan. Billboards are a separate use as a principle structure on a lot and as such have different requirements.

Flood Hazard Areas, Wetlands

Whether you build, remodel or want to construct a parking lot, flood hazard area or wetlands regulations may have an impact on your business.

Specially Designated Areas

In addition to the general items listed above, certain areas such as a local historic district, scenic corridor or airport overlay zone may have special requirements that must be met before new or expanded development can occur.

Submitting Site or Subdivision Plans

Before a building permit is issued, every development must be on a legally existing lot. In addition, the Planning Division Staff must approve minor site plans and the Technical Review Committee must approve major site plans (15,000 s.f.). If a subdivision of land is needed, the preliminary plat should be on the general site plan sheet. The site plan review can take a few days to two weeks or more to complete depending on the complexity of the plan.

CONSTRUCTING THE FACILITY

Overview

While state law allows latitude for property owner rights, we recommend you obtain a fully licensed architect, engineer, land planner and construction company to undertake the design and erection or renovation of your building. Many hours of rework and loss of money can be avoided if you contract with knowledgeable, experienced experts in design and construction.

Submitting Construction Plans

Three sets of building construction plans, including the site plan are required. The drawings should be 1/4" = 1' scale and signed by the person preparing the drawings. Approval of a simple alteration to a building should occur within five working days. Architectural and structural plans may take up to ten working days for full processing. For further information call the Commercial Permit Facilitator at (336) 641-5768.

Grading Permit

Before building, remodeling or disturbing any land, determine your obligations under the soil erosion and sedimentation control regulations. A permit is required when more than one acre is disturbed. Call the Erosion Control Section Chief at (336) 641-3803 for further information.

Water Supply

Most businesses are required to have a water supply. Municipal water is available at many locations and is often critical to businesses that must have sprinkler systems. Contact the Community Services Section at (336) 641-3645 for availability of city water and special requirements. Fee information may also be obtained from them. If city water is **not** available contact the Environmental Health Division at (336) 641-7613 for information on well construction.

Sewage Disposal

If city sewer service is available within 300 feet, businesses are required to use this service. Contact the Community Services Section at (336) 641-3645 for further information including the fee schedule. If city sewer is **not** available contact the Environmental Health Division at (336)

641-7613 for information on requirements associated with a permit for a septic tank system. Additions to existing developments on septic systems will require a check of the system and depending on the type of expansion an extension of the system may be required.

NOTE: The use of a septic system can be a limiting factor as to the type and size of the facility. Be sure to obtain an Improvement Permit from the Environmental Health Department before initiating a project.

Driveway Permit

The N.C. Department of Transportation may require a driveway permit. For further information call (336) 334-3761. Also, turn lanes and road widening may be required in certain situations.

Restaurants, Hotels and Institution Building

Renovation or construction of new or existing restaurants, hotel or institutional food service facilities requires the approval of the Guilford County Health Department. For a review of requirements and inspection, call the Environmental Health Division at (336) 641-3771.

Building Permits

A building permit is issued **after** the following:

1. Erosion control devices are in place. (Note: If it is needed a permit may be issued prior to a building permit)
2. Water and/or sewer fees paid if either serves the site. If the site will be served by either a well or septic system, Environmental Health must approve these improvements.
3. Site plan approval by the Planning Department.
4. Approval for compliance with the Watershed Protection Ordinance, if the project is in a designated watershed.
5. Approval of the building plans by the Plans Engineer. The Engineer coordinates the approval of the fire protection requirements with the Fire Marshal's office.
6. New construction and change of occupancy require D.O.T. driveway permit.
7. Other approval unique to the project. (i.e. air quality, floodplain, special use)
8. Developments within the airport height restriction overlay require FAA approval letter.

Building permit fees are based on the value of the building. Other trade fees (plumbing, mechanical and electrical) are unit based. For more information, contact the Plans Engineer at (336) 641-3753.

Building, Electrical, Plumbing, Mechanical Inspections

The contractor (or owner/contractor) must get inspections associated with the following work: prior to placement of concrete for footings and slabs, foundation, waterproofing, framing, rated assemblies and final inspections by a building inspector. Electric work requires inspection after rough in (prior to covering up) and at final which will allow the release of a meter. Similar

plumbing inspections are required at rough in at final and in order to release a water meter. Mechanical inspections are also required at completion of rough in and at final, which allows for a gas meter to be released. The release of public water and sewer lines for customer use occurs after appropriate testing and approval. To schedule an inspection, call a Building/Zoning Technician at (336) 641-3707 during office hours or use the **IVR phone system** at (336) 641-3833. When scheduling an inspection with this system you will need to know your tracking number and the 3 digit inspection type. The **IVR phone system** is a 24 hour a day automated telephone answering system. In addition to the above, you can now schedule inspections on-line with our new VELOCITY HALL Software. This option is available at www.co.guilford.nc.us. Proceed to on-line services.

Fire Safety

Fire safety inspections of buildings are conducted by the Fire Marshal's Office. Call (336) 641-7565 for further information. In special cases such as high pile storage, aircraft hangar, petroleum storage tanks or hazardous or volatile material storage; the fire code requirements need to be incorporated in building design at a very early stage.

Final Site Plan Compliance

Before a building can receive a final Certificate of Occupancy, a final site plan inspection must be made for approval. During this inspection such items as landscaping, soil erosion control, parking lot paving, sidewalks, fences, utilities and building locations are inspected for compliance with the approved site plan. Also water quality devices (if required) must be completed and the final subdivision plat recorded before a final Certificate of Occupancy can be issued. Call the Erosion Control Section Chief at (336) 641-3803 for further information.

Air Quality Permit

Before the N.C. Division of Environmental Management, Air Quality Section can issue permits associated with the Control of Sources of Air Pollution; the local jurisdiction is required to verify consistency of the facilities. Therefore, pursuant to NCGS 143-215.108(d) and (f) Guilford County must determine: a) that the County has jurisdiction; b) that the County has in effect a Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance applicably to the facility and; c) that the equipment for the facility is consistent with our Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. The applicant initiates the process with the County by first mailing a letter of request for a consistency determination to the Zoning Inspector at (336) 641-5561. The request must include a copy of the Air Quality Permit Application that is required by the State. Our department will review the information and if consistent will notify the State Division of Air Quality, 585 Waughton Street, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27107) by letter with a copy also sent to the applicant.

N.C. Alcoholic Beverage License Approval

Part of the approval process for an Alcoholic Beverage License includes a recommendation by the Guilford County Planning and Development Department. This office, as indicated on the ABC application will either approve or coordinate the approvals for zoning compliance, building codes compliance, fire code compliance and Environmental Health Department compliance. Contact the Zoning Inspector at (336) 641-5561.

Day Care Permit

A maximum of fifteen children are permitted by the Guilford County Development Ordinance for any home day care. Home day care should obtain a home occupation permit. Day care that provides a facility qualifying as a small, medium and large center, should obtain a commercial

building permit.