



4 STEPS TO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN HATTIESBURG

Our vision is for Hattiesburg to become a premier city in the Gulf South. In economic growth, education, health care, culture, entrepreneurship, tourism and especially customer service, our aim is to be the best. We will consistently strive to be bold in our vision and meet and surpass a high standard of excellence in city services. Whether you are constructing a new business from scratch or taking ownership of an existing business, we have the tools and resources you need to get started. This document provides great insight on the basic steps you will need to take. Should you have any questions or need more information, please call 601-545-4599. We look forward to helping you make Hattiesburg a home for your business.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE YOU BEGIN

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION:

Selecting a site or building for your business is a critical decision. The City's Planning Division is a wealth of information and can help you answer several important questions about property you may be interested in:

- Is the area zoned for my business?
- Is the property in a flood zone that might impact use, construction or expansion?
- Are there outstanding code violations or open/incomplete building permits?
- If I plan to build, expand or change the site, are my plans compatible with the City's Land Development Code?
- Is the property part of a special district like Midtown or a historic district, or is my property a protected landmark?

PROTECT YOURSELF:

We provide several services that will aid you in protecting your investments before getting started:

- If you enter a contract or lease arrangement for a property or building, be sure that it is contingent upon any zoning, use, development and/or permit approvals you may need in order to operate your business.
- A Certificate of Zoning Compliance from the Planning Division can formally confirm the appropriateness of a particular use at a certain property.
- A Public Records Request to the City Clerk's office can "provide a record of all open building permits and code violations."

STEP 1 THE PRE-APPLICATION

Pre-Application (Pre-App) meetings help catch and address any potential issues, challenges, snags, etc. that a project may encounter. Needs for re-zoning, variances or conditional use approvals are examples of things a Pre-App meeting can catch early in the development process. They also serve as an opportunity to discuss site design requirements, signage, parking, building & fire codes, utilities, infrastructure, approval processes and more.

- Schedule a Pre-Application meeting with the Planning Division.
 - Not all new businesses will need a Pre-App meeting. Planning Division staff can help make that determination.
 - There is no cost for a Pre-App meeting, and there is a simple, two-page form used to schedule/request the meeting.
 - You may schedule as many Pre-App meetings as you need until you are comfortable moving your project forward through the next steps.
- Optional: Request a Certificate of Zoning Compliance through the Planning Division. While this is not necessarily a part of the Pre-App process, it may be beneficial to ensure a property can be approved for a certain business use before substantial investment is made.

STEP 2

FORMAL SITE PLAN REVIEW

More formal than the Pre-App, the Site Plan Review Committee enables all pertinent departments of the City to review a proposed project. An approved Site Plan is needed in order to move certain projects to their next steps.

- Submit a Site Plan application, review fee, and all requested documents to the Planning Division.
 - Not all projects will need a Site Plan Review. Planning Division staff can help make that determination.
- Generally, a Site Plan Review approval is required for projects that include:
 - New construction or installing accessory structures (multi-family and non-residential)
 - Additions, expansions, or commercial/residential subdivisions*
 - Site Changes (including changes to the existing exterior space of the property)
 - Moving structures
- Upon approval, a Site Plan Affidavit will be issued and the development steps may continue.

*Some subdivision projects will require consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council following review by the Site Plan Review Committee.

STEP 3

BUILDING & SIGN PERMITS

This step serves to ensure that building plans meet the standards of the 2018 International Building Codes adopted by the city and to ensure that contractors pulling permits are properly licensed. Note: Signs are reviewed and permitted separately from buildings.

- Provide the Site Plan Affidavit along with necessary permit applications and building plans to the Building Division.
 - Building Plan review typically takes 5-7 business days.
 - Permit applications should include all subcontractors, if known.
 - Permits should be pulled by city-licensed contractors.
 - Contractors coordinate inspections with the Building Division.
- Certificate of Occupancy/Final Inspections
 - Certificates of Occupancy are issued when all inspections are completed to satisfaction, including completion of the site design elements according to the Site Plan.
- Submit sign permit application to the Building Division.
 - Signs are permitted separately from the building/site.
 - Sign permit application review typically takes 1-2 business days.
 - The Planning Division can assist in identifying sign regulations for a site for proposed sign concepts.

STEP 4

PRIVILEGE TAX LICENSE (BUSINESS LICENSE)

In some instances, it may be appropriate or necessary for a business to apply for the Privilege Tax License (PTL) earlier in this process. However, be aware that it is a violation of city code for a business to begin operating in a location prior to receiving necessary certificates of occupancy or final inspection, or for businesses that operate out of compliance with zoning regulations.

- Submit the PTL application to the City's Tax Division.
 - Inspections will be scheduled by the Building Division and Fire Department (unless inspections were recently completed as a part of permitted construction work).
 - Additional licensing requirements exist for some business/use types such as food sales, beer, liquor, or tobacco businesses, and childcare operations.
 - Location changes, ownership changes, and changed or additional uses require updated or new PTLs.

CONTACTS & SERVICES FOR NEW BUSINESSES

Certificate of Zoning Compliance	City of Hattiesburg, Planning Division	601-545-4599
Privilege Tax License	City of Hattiesburg, Tax Division	601-545-4522
Public Records Requests	City of Hattiesburg, City Clerk	601-545-4550
Writing a Business Plan	USM Small Business Development Center	601-266-5892
Workforce Training	PRCC, Lowery A. Woodall Advanced Tech. Center	601-403-1241