

LANCASTER COUNTY OPEN FOR BUSINESS



CALL FOR AN
APPOINTMENT
803-416-9777

We know that running a small business can be a daunting task, and starting a new business can be even more intimidating. To encourage and assist you in seeing your business plan become a reality, Lancaster County has created the *Open for Business* program. This program provides concierge services designed to assist small businesses in existing buildings navigate the permitting process.

PREPARING FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT

In preparation for your appointment, we ask that you complete the attached Change of Tenant application. Please answer as many questions as you can. The realtor or leasing agent for your potential location should be able to provide most of the information related to the property itself.

Having as much information as possible about your business, the building, and the site will help us in providing the most accurate guidance to you.



Feasibility Inspection:

- ***Change of Tenant with same type of business***
- ***Change of use***

After discussing your application with the Open for Business staff, they may conduct a *Feasibility Inspection* of your proposed site. This is not a construction inspection and in no way certifies the overall soundness or suitability of the building, the structure, the site, or any other elements. This inspection is conducted to reveal factors that may need to be addressed to meet County codes. Early knowledge of what might have turned into unanticipated costs, will assist you greatly when preparing your budget. The Feasibility Inspection includes the site (parking, landscaping, etc.) and the building.

FEASIBILITY INSPECTION REPORT

Change of Tenant with Same Type of Business

If you are occupying or relocating to a building or space that was previously occupied by the same type of business within the last six months, there will likely be no changes required to the building unless there is damage or the space has been altered without permits. There may, however, be some exceptions related to safety requirements.



Change of the Type of Use in a Commercial Building or Changing a Building to Commercial from Another Category



Changes of use require compliance with current codes, this will require changes to the building and the site:

Some things that may be required

- Additional Parking
- Handicap Parking and Signage
- Paving Parking Lot
- Widening Driveway/Access
- Additional Landscaping
- Additional Restrooms
- Electrical Changes
- ADA Accommodations
- Life Safety Accommodations

NEXT STEPS

Inspection Results

If the inspection reveals that significant changes or improvements are required, your next step would be to prepare an application for a Upfit Permit that may require a site and/or building plans. You should use the Feasibility Inspection Report and the checklist to prepare complete plans for your specific project. If using

a design professional, provide them with a copy of the Report. In some instances, use of a registered architect or engineer is required. You will be advised if this is the case.

Submitting Plans for Approval

When your plans are complete, submit both the site and building plans to the Development Services department. The plans will be reviewed within 10-15 business days. You and your design professional will be notified if the plans are approved or if they require revision. You will be provided a detailed list of review comments. Our goal is to provide enough information so that the plans can be revised accordingly and approved.

Selecting the Right Licensed Contractor

Once your plans are approved, you will begin the process of selecting a licensed contractor. Having an approved set of plans and bids or estimates is helpful in avoiding costly surprises and unexpected expenditures. It also gives your contractor a more complete understanding of the project. This results in a more accurate estimate and more competitive pricing.

Your Contractor Obtains the Permits and Calls for Inspections

Permits can only be obtained by an appropriately licensed South Carolina general contractor. The general contractor must also provide a list of any subcontractors that they plan to use. Those subcontractors must be licensed as well. We will provide your contractor with an approved set of plans to use as a field copy. These plans must be kept at the job site until the project is completed. The general contractor is tasked with calling for the required inspections of the work as it progresses. This helps avoid any premature requests which will result in reinspection fees.

IN THE HOME STRETCH

Don't Forget your Sign

An important part of any business is its signage. Signs are issued their own separate permits and are usually handled by a dedicated sign contractor. Sign contractors can often help you design the most effective signs as well and manufacture and install them. Most area sign contractors are familiar with Lancaster County's sign regulations and the process for obtaining permits.

Certificate of Occupancy and Zoning Compliance Certificate are Issued

When your building site improvements are complete, the general contractor will then call for the final inspections to secure the Certificate of Occupancy (CO). This inspection includes the building and site work. When everything is inspected and approved, you will be issued a CO.

Open for Business

Congratulations! You are now ready for your Grand Opening! Be sure to visit our website at www.mylancastersc.net to find out about the marketing opportunities available for your business. Our website does not mention Grand Openings.

Local Business Resources

The Lancaster County Chamber of Commerce is available to assist you in many ways. From opening a new business to obtaining information to make your existing business more successful.



- Lancaster County Chamber of Commerce
- Small Business Development Center at Winthrop University
- Entrepreneur Network at York Technical College
- The Catawba Regional Development Corporation

HELPFUL RESOURCES

State of South Carolina Resources:

- SC Business One Stop
- SC Department of Commerce
- SC Department of Commerce - Business Resource Guide
- SC Department of Consumer Affairs
- SC Department of Health & Environmental Control - Smart Business Recycling Program



- SC Department of Labor, Licensing & Regulation
- SC Department of Revenue
- SC Department of Revenue - Business Tax Guide
- SC Department of Revenue - Tax Workshops SC
- Department of Employment & Workforce
- SC Division of Small and Minority Business Contracting and Certification
- SC State Law Enforcement Division SC
- Secretary of State's Office

Business Support Organizations:

- Better Business Bureau
- Minority Business Development Center
- Lancaster County Public Library
- Duke Energy for My Business
- SC Business Review
- SC Chamber of Commerce
- SC Council on Competitiveness
- SC Economic Developers Association
- SC Women's Business Center
- Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)
- Southern Rural Development Center

Federal Agencies:

- List of All Federal Agencies and Commissions
- U.S. Financial Literacy and Education Commission – Starting a Business
- U.S. Department of Labor, Registered Apprenticeships
- US Internal Revenue Service
- FAQ - Small Business/Self-Employed/Other Business Category
- How to contact the IRS
- IRS Forms and Publications
- Small Business & Self-Employed Community Small
- Business Video & Audio Presentations Small Business
- Tax Workshops, Etc.
- Tax Information for Businesses
- U.S. Small Business Administration
- Starting a Business
- U.S. Business Gateway
- Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- Small Business Development Centers of SC (SBDC) - Steps to Starting a Small Business
- Small Business Development Centers of SC (SBDC)



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

101 N. MAIN STREET, P O BOX 1809, LANCASTER SOUTH CAROLINA, PHONE (803) 285-1969
EMAIL PERMITS@LANCASTERSC.NET

CHANGE OF TENANT

PLEASE ALLOW 5 BUSINESS DAYS FOR PROCESSING

Review fee is \$50.00

Name of proposed tenant/business name: _____

Site address: _____

Property owner: _____ Email: _____ Contact #: _____

Applicant: _____ Email: _____ Contact #: _____

Applicant Mailing address: _____ Tax Map Number: _____

Attach approval document from the property owner acknowledging proposed use or the property owner signature on this application.

Proposed use or request: _____

Previous use: _____ If vacant, how long? _____

Use means-The principal activity or function that actually takes place or is intended to take place on a parcel of land or building.

2021 International Building Code, Section 105.1 – Any owner or authorized agent who intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system, the installation of which is regulated by this Code, or to cause any such work to be done, shall first make application to the Building Official and obtain necessary permits. The Change of Tenant Zoning Permit can only be issued if no work is to be performed.

Are any improvements being made to the building? Yes No Are any improvements being made to the site? Yes No
If improvements are being made to the building or site, provide a description of changes on a separate paper.

Date your business is anticipated to open: _____ Current power provider: _____

Square footage of your space: _____ Total square footage of building: _____

Total number of parking spaces for building: _____ Number of parking spaces for business: _____

Number of disabled parking spaces: _____ Number of restrooms: _____ Accessible: Yes No

Zoning Permit is required for any development activity requiring a Building Permit or change of use. A site inspection will be done by the Zoning & Fire Department. The applicant agrees that no land disturbance activity shall commence without first obtaining the proper approvals and permits from the Stormwater Division. The applicant certifies information on this application is true and correct. If any information is false or misleading, the Change of Tenant is considered void.

Signature of applicant: _____ Date submitted: _____

Signature of property owner: _____ Date signed: _____

IF YOU ARE OPENING A BUSINESS IN AN EXISTING BUILDING, THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW REGARDING LANCASTER COUNTY'S ZONING, BUILDING & FIRE REGULATIONS:

CHANGE OF TENANT: A change of tenant application is required for any business by Lancaster County prior to power being established with any power provider.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE: We strongly advise before leasing, purchasing, or otherwise committing to a property, you confirm that the existing zoning, physical layout of the building, and site are appropriate for the intended use. This includes having a clear understanding of any zoning, building, fire restrictions, or limitations that may affect your business, and any building and site modifications that may be necessary to open your business.

MEETING WITH STAFF: We encourage you to schedule a meeting with staff and we look forward to working personally with you on your project. At this initial meeting, bring your completed change of tenant application answering as many questions as you can. We will help you complete any information you do not have or uncertain about. At this initial meeting, we should be able to determine whether the property is zoned properly for your use and whether there are any major issues in meeting building requirements that might preclude moving forward.

COUNTY PERFORMS FEASIBILITY INSPECTIONS: After we meet to discuss your business, we can make a “feasibility inspection” of the site. This inspection is not intended as a construction inspection and in no way certifies the overall soundness or suitability of the building, structure, or site. The inspection is offered to give you an idea of any improvements or modifications that may be required to meet County codes, so you can determine anticipated costs and expenses to finalize your budget and plans. The inspection covers the site (parking, landscaping, ingress/egress, and handicap parking) and building to see what changes, if any, will be required for compliance with County codes.

CHANGE OF USE: Building codes and zoning regulations assign use classifications to the types of activities or businesses that take place within a building. For example, under the building codes, an insurance office is classified as business use while a music store is considered mercantile use even though to the general public they are both businesses. These classifications are important in determining what, if any, modifications you will be required to make to your new location. Additionally, certain zoning use definitions may differ from use definitions of the building code. What may be a building code defined change of use may not be considered a change of use by zoning standards.

BUILDING OR BUILDING SITE ALTERATIONS: If you plan to renovate, change or alter the building in any way, to include structural and nonstructural changes, electrical or mechanical alterations, those changes or alterations must comply with the current codes and application permits must be obtained. In some instances, depending on the size and occupancy classification of your business, architectural or engineering drawings may be required as part of a plan submittal when applying for a Building Permit.

IF YOUR BUSINESS IS CONSIDERED A CHANGE OF USE: Once the business you are planning to open or relocate is classified differently than the previous occupant's use of the space or building, there may be a requirement to make certain modifications to the building and building site. If modifications are only needed for the building than a Building Upfit Permit may need to be applied for. If changes are needed to the building site, then site plan approval may be needed.

IF YOUR BUSINESS IS NOT CONSIDERED A CHANGE OF USE, AND YOU ARE NOT DOING ANY CHANGES: Once it has been determined that your proposed business is not a change of use per the building codes or zoning regulations and no structural changes are being made, a change of tenant zoning permit may be issued. Please allow up to five business days for processing.

IF YOUR BUSINESS IS NOT A CHANGE OF USE: There may also be a situation where your business is classified as the same use as the previous occupant but your business creates an expansion of the use or you generate a secondary use different from the primary intended use. Even though your business may not be a change of use, an expansion of the use or the addition of another use may require additional restroom facilities or parking spaces and may require additional fire protection. For example, if you have a restroom or restrooms that are not handicapped accessible, there would be a requirement to provide accessible restrooms. Many times this cannot be accomplished without enlarging the existing restroom(s) or even adding new facilities. There may also be requirements for additional fire protection (such as sprinklers or fire rated walls) or for revisions to the site such as parking and landscaping. Also, if any structural changes are being made to the building, this would trigger the need for a Building Permit.