

CITY OF COLLEGE STATION
Home of Texas A&M University®

GUIDE TO BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

Mission

This guide is intended to provide an overview of the various phases of land development in College Station. It is not, however, intended to provide every technical detail or requirement of each phase of the process. While many of the details of the development process are not included in the manual, it is the responsibility of the developer to ensure all appropriate ordinances and procedures are followed. If you ever have any questions that are not addressed in this manual, or if you need clarification on something that is, call the Planning & Development Services Department, and they will help you find the answer and guide you through the process.

Purpose

The City of College Station Development Guide is designed to help the Development Coordinator and the Planning & Development Services Department inform interested citizens and potential developers about how the process works. This guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and other publications referenced by this guide. Much of this information and additional information may be found by accessing the Planning and Development Services Department webpage on the City's website www.cstx.gov.

Overview

The City of College Station's policies, standards, and regulations regarding land use and development are designed to help ensure the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens, while protecting the rights and privileges of property owners. The development review process is the City's administrative system developed to assist in the efficient and consistent enforcement of these policies, standards, and regulations.

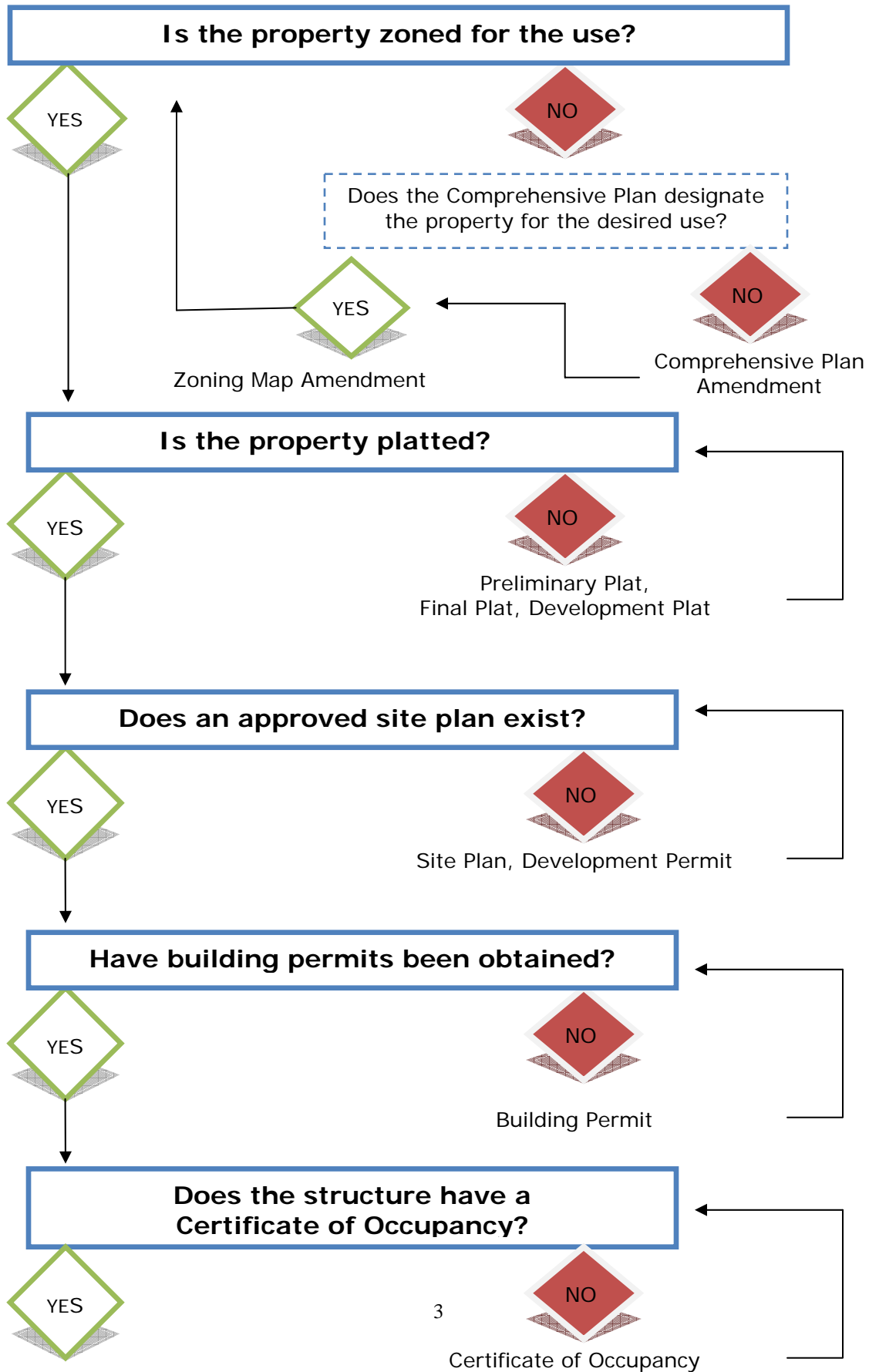
The development process is made up of separate processes that may be required in order to build and occupy a building. Examples of these processes include zoning, platting, site planning, and permitting.

The number of processes with which you will need to be involved depends on your development plans and the existing circumstances of your property. At the earliest stages of planning your project, you should be aware of which steps you will need to take. You will also need to know where each step is initiated, what information will be required, who will be involved, and what will happen. This manual is an attempt to provide you with answers to these and other pertinent questions.

This guide describes the most recent development processes in College Station. In using this guide, it is helpful to remember that although various processes can be started simultaneously, the process is designed to run in sequence. Collectively, each section of this manual details each phase of the review process that makes up the development process, answering critical questions to help ease your way through the system.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of this guide. To prevent any misinformation or problems that may arise from out-of-date information, always contact the appropriate City Staff before beginning any of the review processes described in this manual.

Development Process Flowchart



General Approval Procedures

The provisions of the UDO and the Comprehensive Plan apply to all development that occurs within the corporate limits of the City of College Station and, where applicable, the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). The ETJ consists of all land that is contiguous to the College Station City limits that is unincorporated and not within another city's ETJ. The ETJ line extends 3.5 miles from the City limits.

Pre-application Conference (PAC)

Prior to the submission of an [application](#), a Pre-application Conference with Staff is highly recommended. These meetings allow an applicant to ask questions of City staff in regards to the review process, development requirements and other information related to a project. A staff planner, development engineer, fire marshal, utilities representative and/or other City staff may attend these meetings.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What should be submitted for a PAC?

The Planning & Development Services Department will schedule a PAC with as much or as little information the applicant has available. The minimum may be just an address or approximate location and an idea of a use on the property. Although a PAC is not the time for formal review of a project submission, with more specific information, the planning staff may be able to provide more detailed information. PACs are set up to be informative sessions for the applicant about any problems that may arise with the project, as well as detail about the processes that have to be completed for development to take place.

2. What happens if my application is submitted after the deadline?

Any application submitted after a deadline will be subject to the following deadline.

3. What happens to my application after it is submitted?

Once an application is submitted, it is first reviewed for completeness. A memo will be sent to you to verify if the submission is complete. Once a submittal is considered complete, it is logged by Staff then distributed to the Project Managers for their review. For applications that are approved at Staff level, once the first review is completed, Planning & Development Services will contact you about the status of your application. This may include comments that need to be addressed for a second review. After the comments are addressed, the information should be submitted by the applicant to be reviewed again for the next deadline. This cycle may continue until the project satisfactorily meets the City's regulations.

Other processes, like Rezoning and Comprehensive Plan amendments, are scheduled for the Planning & Zoning Commission to take action according to the [submission deadlines](#), after Staff review.

[Building Permit Applications](#) are reviewed by the Plans Examiners before any permit can be issued.

Zoning

Zoning is a function of municipal government, authorized by State Law, which allows local governments to establish distinct districts for the purpose of regulating the use and development of land. The City of College Station adopted its first Zoning Ordinance in 1940. Today, zoning is regulated through the Unified Development Ordinance.

The goal of the Unified Development Ordinance is not to regulate every detail of local development, but rather to ensure compatible land-use patterns by minimizing conflicts between uses and, therefore, protecting property values and enhancing the urban environment. Zoning and its ensuing regulations help the City to carry out its land-use plans in order to ensure that growth and development is predictable.

Zoning regulations also aid in the following:

- Encourage the most appropriate use of property;
- Prevent traffic problems by not allowing a concentration of heavy traffic generators to locate in the same area, without having an adequate street system;
- Provide for adequate open and developed space;
- Control population density;
- Make it easier to provide water, sewer, roads, parks, and public buildings;
- Minimize damage in case of natural disasters;
- Control unlawful uses of land and buildings;
- Conserve energy in land and building use; and
- Promote the public health, safety, economy, and general welfare.

Comprehensive Plan Amendment

The [Comprehensive Plan](#) serves to establish a vision for sound, stable, and desirable development within the City. The Future Land Use and Character Plan and the Thoroughfare Plan are part of the Comprehensive Plan, and serve to guide the general development goals of the City. The Future Land Use and Character Plan sets out general locations of where development should occur by use, and the Thoroughfare Plan sets out the general location of the future road network. In addition, neighborhood plans and corridor and district plans will be compiled to further guide development and identify enhancement opportunities in neighborhood planning areas and planning district/corridor areas.

[Applications](#) for amendments to the Comprehensive Plan are reviewed in light of changed or changing conditions in a particular area in the City from the original Plan. An amendment may be initiated by the City Council, the Planning & Zoning Commission, the Administrator, or the property owner. Depending on the scope and other factors, amendments may be considered as needed, annually, or every five years.

For more information about Comprehensive Plan Amendments, please see [Article 3](#) of the UDO.

Zoning Map Amendment (Rezoning)

The Official Zoning Map may be amended to rezone an area or extend the boundary of an existing zoning district to accommodate changes in development growth. All amendments must be in accordance with the [Comprehensive Plan](#).

Once a complete application has been submitted, Staff will research and review the amendment request and make a report to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Staff will review a rezoning request and make a recommendation based on the following factors:

- Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan;
- Compatibility with present zoning, uses of nearby property, and character of the neighborhood;
- Suitability of the property for uses permitted by the proposed district;
- Suitability of the property for uses permitted by the current district;
- Marketability of the property for uses currently permitted; and
- Availability of infrastructure suitable and adequate for the proposed use.

For more information about Zoning Map Amendments, please see [Article 3](#) of the UDO.

Conditional Use Permit

A Conditional Use Permit is necessary for uses which are generally compatible with uses permitted by right in a zoning district, but require individual review of their location, design, configuration, density and intensity, and may require the imposition of additional conditions in order to ensure the appropriateness and compatibility of the use at a particular location.

This process provides the City Council with discretionary approval of uses with unique or widely varying operating characteristics or unusual site development features.

For more information about Conditional Use Permits, please see [Article 3](#) of the UDO.

Variances

The [Zoning Board of Adjustment](#) is authorized to grant a variance from the terms of the UDO if they find that the strict enforcement of the UDO would create a substantial hardship to the applicant by virtue of unique special conditions not found elsewhere within the City, and that the variance would preserve the spirit and intent of the Ordinance, and serve the general interests of the public and the applicant.

The Zoning Board of Adjustment has the authority to grant variances from the standards in the UDO, except for standards in Article 8, Subdivision Design and Improvements, and requests for relief from a site plan requirement.

For more information about Variances, please see [Article 3](#) of the UDO.

Written Interpretation

Although the Unified Development Ordinance was written with every effort to be as clear and concise as possible, there are occasions where an interpretation might be necessary to better understand a regulation or provision. The UDO provides the Administrator with the authority to make those interpretations upon request. These [requests](#) may only be made

during development review or when a code enforcement requirement is in question, and will be provided in writing.

For more information about Written Interpretations, please see [Article 3](#) of the UDO.

Administrative Adjustment

Administrative Adjustments are deviations from development standards where the proposed development would be:

- Compatible with surrounding land uses;
- Harmonious with the public interest; and
- Consistent with the purposes of the UDO.

The Administrator may use this tool to authorize adjustments of up to 10 percent from any numerical zoning standard set forth in Articles 5, 6, or 7 of the UDO. Any [adjustment request](#) greater than 10 percent will be treated as a variance handled by the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

For more information about Administrative Adjustments, please see [Article 3](#) of the UDO.

Administrative Appeals

Appeals to the Zoning Board of Adjustment may be requested by any person aggrieved by, or any officer or department affected by, specific points found in any of the following final decisions of the Administrator:

- Written interpretations of the text of the UDO; and
- Denial of building permit or site plan based on interpretation of Section 7 of the UDO.

An appeal from any final decision of the Administrator must be filed within 30 days of receipt of the decision. If no appeal is filed within 30 days, the decision is final. The Zoning Board of Adjustment will hear the appeal within 60 days of the appeal application. The Board only considers the specific interpretive language of the Administrator and may reverse or affirm wholly or partly, or may modify the interpretation appealed. In any case, the Board may only present findings regarding specific errors made in the Administrator's interpretation.

For more information about Administrative Appeals, please see [Article 3](#) of the UDO.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I find out what my property is zoned and what uses are permitted?

Zoning Fact Sheets are available from the Planning & Development Services Department, or on the City's website www.cstx.gov; however, the Planner on Call within the Planning & Development Services Department is also a point of contact for any zoning information.

2. What if the zoning on my property does not permit the use I want?

You may request a rezoning to a district which allows your intended use, find other property zoned appropriately, or check to see if your use may be considered as a conditional use in the zoning district.

3. What does the Staff consider when making a recommendation?

Staff will look at the City's Comprehensive Plan and Development Policies to see if the uses permitted in the requested zoning district are compatible with projected future land uses, existing land uses, and any relevant development policies. Impacts of the range of uses permitted in the requested district on surrounding development and anticipated future development will be examined. The review criteria that are considered for a rezoning are found in [Section 3.2](#) of the UDO.

4. How long does the rezoning process take?

A minimum of two months is needed to complete the required public hearings.

5. How does the public hearing process work?

First a public hearing will be held before the Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z). Staff will make a presentation and recommendation, after which the applicant will be allowed to present their case. Then the public will be allowed to comment. After the public hearing is closed, the Commission will make a recommendation to the City Council.

The City Council will hold the second public hearing. Staff will make a presentation and recommendation, including P&Z recommendations, after which the applicant will be allowed to present their case. The public then will be allowed to comment. The Council will decide the final outcome of the request.

6. How is the public notified of my request involving a public hearing?

The Planning & Development Services Department publishes a legal notice in the Classified Section of the local newspaper, posts the agenda of the meeting at City Hall, mails certified notices to all property owners within 200 feet of the property under consideration, and may place or require to be placed a sign advertising the public hearing on the subject property.

7. What if my request does not comply with the adopted Future Land Use and Character Plan and Comprehensive Plan?

If your request does not comply with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan, you must apply for a [Comprehensive Plan Amendment](#). The factors used for amendment consideration can be found in [Chapter 9](#) of the Comprehensive Plan.

8. If the Council denies my request, may I submit another application?

According to the UDO, the same request cannot be reconsidered within 180 days unless this time frame is waived by the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Platting

Platting is a tool used to implement the City's [Comprehensive Plan](#) and encourage sound growth within the community. Platting, or the subdivision of land, ultimately becomes a public responsibility because infrastructure must be maintained and public services provided. For this reason, the City regulates platting to ensure compliance with the

Thoroughfare Plan, planning policies, and adequate extension of infrastructure. Chapter 212 of the Local Government Code sets forth subdivision enabling legislation for Texas cities.

The City of College Station, therefore, has adopted minimum standards in the Subdivision Regulations with the intent to:

- Encourage the growth of the City in an orderly manner while protecting the public health, safety and welfare;
- Ensure that street, water, and wastewater systems are of a safe design and construction, streets are adequately sized to accommodate the maneuvering of emergency vehicles, and the future property owner is guaranteed a parcel with facilities suited to its intended use;
- Provide adequate public open spaces, utility services, public facilities, and proper arrangement of roads in relation to the City of College Station Comprehensive Plan;
- Provide economy in governmental expenditure and ensure an equitable allocation of public improvement costs between residents and the taxpayers of the City as a whole;
- Ensure that proper land surveys and records of land titles are prepared and recorded; and
- Encourage coordination of land development with orderly physical patterns in accordance with policies adopted by the City Council.

A Plat is required when any of the following occur:

- The division of land (for any purpose) into two or more parcels;
- Development on a parcel not previously legally platted; or
- Development that involves the construction of any public improvements that are to be dedicated to the City.

If a property has not been platted, meaning a final plat or development plat has not been approved or designated by the City and filed for record with the County, or if any of the standards have not been complied with in full, the City of College Station will not:

- Issue building, repair, plumbing or electrical permits for any structure on that property;
- Repair, maintain, install or provide any streets or public utilities or services on that property;
- Sell or supply water, electricity or sewer service to that property.

Types of Plats in College Station

Development Plats are required for properties that are exempt from Final Platting.

Minor Plats are required when the subdivision has 4 lots or fewer and does not require easements or extension of public facilities.

Amending Plats are required in order to correct errors or adjust lot lines on a previously approved plat. No new lots may be created by an Amending Plat.

Preliminary Plats are required prior to development of any property that is not exempt from the platting requirements. A Preliminary Plat must be approved prior to filing for Final Plat approval. A Preliminary Plat may expire if a Final Plat is not filed within 24 months of the Preliminary Plat approval, unless an extension by the Planning and Zoning Board is requested before the Preliminary Plat expires.

Final Plats are required for the final subdivision of land. Final Plats are the formal maps that are filed with the County for the sale of land.

[Replats](#) are required when property is already legally platted and further subdivision is desired.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I know if my property is currently platted?

Visit with the City of College Station Planning & Development Services Planner on Call. They may be able to tell you if and when the property was platted and may be able to show you the actual plat. The City of College Station General Map, available on the City website www.cstx.gov, also displays platted property.

2. How do I know if my property needs platting?

[Article 8](#) of the UDO requires that any division of property that occurred after July 15, 1970 must be done on a plat that is filed for record at the county courthouse. In short, if the lot lines have changed since 1970 or will be changing, it **MUST** be platted. If the property is not required to be final platted, a Development Plat must be completed.

3. How do I get a plat prepared?

You will need to enlist the services of a professional engineer or surveyor registered in the State of Texas to prepare the plat. You can locate one of these professionals by contacting the Texas Society of Professional Engineers, the Texas Surveyor's Association, the American Planning Association, or by looking in the yellow pages.

4. What is a Master Plan?

Master Plans are no longer processed by the City. However, previously approved Master Plans are still binding. A Master Plan shows all property being developed or any property contiguous to that property being developed that is under the same ownership. It is conceptual in nature, showing approximate locations and sizes of thoroughfares, parkland areas, and land uses. It also includes any proposed zoning changes that may be necessary.

5. What is a Preliminary Plat?

A Preliminary Plat will provide specific lot and utility layout, as well as phasing. Once a Preliminary Plat is approved by the City, final plats may be submitted directly from this Preliminary Plat.

6. How long is my Preliminary Plat valid?

A Preliminary Plat is effective for only 24 months, but may be extended one time for 12 months upon written request and approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission. A Final Plat can extend a Preliminary Plat for one additional year.

7. What is a Final Plat?

A Final Plat is a document required for the creation of a legal lot of record which depicts lots, streets, public improvements, and easements for the platted property.

8. What is a Minor or Amending Plat?

A Minor Plat is a subdivision involving four or fewer lots fronting on an existing street and that does not require the creation of any new street or the extension of municipal facilities. An Amending Plat is required to correct minor errors, as defined by state law, on a previously approved and filed plat. The approval of a Minor or Amending Plat is through administrative action.

9. What is a Replat?

Replats apply to previously platted property and are required to alter or create new lots or change lot lines from a recorded plat. State law requires that a public hearing be held for the consideration of a Replat. Replats of single-family or duplex-zoned property also require notification of surrounding property owners.

10. What is a Vacating Plat?

A plat may be vacated (that is, dissolved) at any time before any lot is sold; however, if any of the lots within the subdivision have been sold, all owners of lots within the subdivision must sign the Vacating Plat if the entire plat, or any part of the plat, is to be vacated, including easements.

11. What is a Development Plat?

A Development Plat usually includes existing and proposed structures and improvements, easements, right-of-way, property that is intended to be dedicated to the public including parks, streets, sidewalks, alleys, infrastructure and utilities.

12. When is a Development Plat required?

A Development Plat is required prior to development for ALL property that is not required to Final Plat.

13. Who approves plats?

Preliminary Plats, Final Plats, Replats and Development Plats are reviewed by Staff and by the [Parks and Recreation Board](#), and forwarded to the [Planning & Zoning Commission](#) for final approval. Amending Plats and Minor Plats may be approved by the Administrator.

14. If my plat is underway, what additional plans will I need to submit if there are public improvements involved?

If your subdivision requires public improvements (extension of water lines, sewer lines, streets, sidewalks, or drainage facilities), you must submit a set of construction plans and associated reports. These plans must be submitted for review along with the final plat application. The construction plans will need to be drawn by a registered professional engineer, duly authorized and licensed under the provisions of the Texas Engineering Registration Act.

Site Planning

Site Planning is the process through which the City ensures compliance with all codes and ordinances relative to landscaping and buffers, building height and setbacks, construction of parking lots and other elements of the building site. A final plat or development plat must be filed before a Site Plan can be approved. Site Plans are required for all commercial and multi-family residential developments. In each case, the process will include the review and approval of civil construction documents, a site plan and a landscape plan. For most commercial developments, a Non-Residential Architectural Standards review will also be included.

The City of College Station has adopted minimum standards for Site Plans in the [Unified Development Ordinance](#) with the intent to provide for the following:

- Safe and convenient traffic control, handling, and vehicle queuing;
- Assured pedestrian safety;
- Efficient and economic public utilities;
- Public road or street access;
- Safe and efficient internal access;
- Adequate parking and maneuvering areas;
- Noise and emission control or dispersion;
- Runoff, drainage, and flood control;
- Visual screening of areas offensive to the public or adjacent developments;
- Compliance with the City's adopted Streetscape Plan;
- Clear indication of what constitutes the building plot for signage, access, and design compatibility; and
- Location and density of buildings or dwellings where topography or characteristics of the site compel a lower density than would otherwise be allowed, or require location consistent with accepted engineering practices and principles.

A Site Plan, meeting the requirements of the Unified Development Ordinance, is required when any of the following occur within the City of College Station:

- Development of vacant land
- Any new addition to an existing developed site
- When 25% of the landscape is changed

If a Site Plan has not met all of the requirements of the Unified Development Ordinance and has not been approved by the Planning & Development Services Department, the City of College Station will not issue a Building Permit for any structure on that property.

For more information about Site Plans, please see [Article 3](#) of the UDO.

Design Districts

The Design Districts in College Station include [Northgate](#) (NG) and [Wolf Pen Creek Corridor](#) (WPC). There are additional requirements above and beyond the standard site plan, building, and sign submittal requirements in these districts.

For more information about Design Districts, please see [Article 5](#) of the UDO.

Development Permit

A Development Permit is necessary for any site or infrastructure work required prior to any building construction. A full Development Permit cannot be issued without an approved Site Plan. The following uses are exempt from the permitting requirements:

- Customary and incidental grounds maintenance, landscaping, and gardening;
- Drainage-related improvements or modifications by a homeowner on property used as their principal residence where that property lies outside of the designated Area of Special Flood Hazard; and
- Uses by a landowner of their property for bona fide agricultural purposes.

Upon submission of a complete application, [Development Permit Applications](#) are reviewed by the Development Engineer. Based on the following relevant factors, the Development Engineer may approve, approve with conditions, or disapprove a Development Permit Application:

- The danger to life or property due to flooding or erosion damage;
- The susceptibility of the proposed facility and its contents to flood damage and the effect of such damage on the individual owner;
- The danger that materials may be swept onto other lands to the injury of others;
- The compatibility of the proposed use with existing and anticipated development;
- The maintenance and operational costs of providing governmental services during and after flood conditions, including maintenance and repair of streets and bridges, and public utilities and facilities such as sewer, gas, electrical, and water systems;
- The expected heights, velocity, duration, rate of rise, and sediment transport of the flood waters, and the effects of wave action, if applicable, expected at the site;
- The necessity to the facility of a waterfront location, where applicable;
- The availability of alternative locations, not subject to flooding or erosion damage, for the proposed use;
- The barricading of existing trees to remain on the property and count as protected trees under Section 7.5 of the UDO, Landscaping and Tree Protection; and
- Compliance with the UDO.

For more information about Development Permits, please see [Article 3](#) of the UDO.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. For what projects must I submit a Site Plan application and completed checklist?

Any commercial or multi-family development must have an approved Site Plan before any Building Permits may be issued.

2. How will I know if my Site Plan has been approved?

Any comments about the Site Plan will be sent via fax or e-mail to the people named on the application. When the Site Plan is ready to be stamped approved, we will ask for the appropriate number of copies to be submitted for stamping.

3. How long does it take to get a Site Plan approved?

Deadlines for new submittals are Wednesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. All submittals received before this deadline will be assigned to a Staff planner and development

engineer to be reviewed during the next week's review. You should receive comments on the site plan by 5:00 p.m. the second following Monday. Once you have addressed all comments you may re-submit by the next deadline for a second review. This process continues until all of Staff's comments have been met.

4. What if my Site Plan does not comply with all of the regulations in the Unified Development Ordinance?

All Site Plans must comply with the regulations contained in the UDO. If the site is unable to comply because of a special condition relating to the land, a Variance to the requirement may be requested.

5. Once my Site Plan is approved, what do I do next?

Once you have an approved Site Plan, you may apply for Building Permits.

6. Does my approved Site Plan ever expire?

Yes. An approved Site Plan expires in 24 months if a Building Permit has not been obtained.

7. What if I want to clear my property before my plans are approved by City Staff?

You may do this provided you have applied for and received a Development Permit that allows you to do earthwork.

Building Permitting

Permits provide a means for the City to reduce the potential hazards of unsafe construction and therefore ensuring the public health, safety and welfare. Building permitting is the process through which the City ensures compliance with all codes and ordinances relative to the construction of buildings and building sites. The City of College Station requires contractors to [register](#) prior to obtaining a [Building Permit](#). A homeowner may obtain a Building Permit to perform work on a building that is owned and occupied by him as his homestead without registering with the City as a contractor; however, licensed contractors must obtain all electrical, plumbing, and mechanical permits.

Generally, Building Permits will fall into one of two categories - [residential](#) or [commercial](#). In each case, the process will include the review and approval of construction and site plans, payment of permit fees, issuance of a Building Permit, scheduled inspections of the work in progress and approval at its completion.

For more information about Building Permits, please see [Article 3](#) of the UDO.

Certificate of Occupancy

A Certificate of Occupancy (CO) ensures that a structure complies with all ordinances and codes for the City of College Station, thereby assuring the applicant that the structure is ready for occupancy. This document, obtained through the City's Building Inspection Office,

is required for both new residential and commercial buildings, as well as some tenant changes in commercial buildings.

The Certificate of Occupancy should not be confused with a Building Permit, which only allows initial construction to take place. A CO is a document that is required prior to the occupation of the structure.

A Certificate of Occupancy is required for any of the following:

- Occupancy and use of a building hereafter erected or enlarged;
- Change in use of an existing building to a different Use Category; or
- Any change in a nonconforming use or structure.

It is unlawful to occupy any building that does not have a valid Certificate of Occupancy or Temporary Certificate of Occupancy.

For more information about Certificates of Occupancy, please see [Article 3](#) of the UDO.

Temporary Certificate of Occupancy

Pending the issuance of a permanent Certificate of Occupancy, a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy may be issued. The Temporary Certificate of Occupancy will be valid for a period established by the Building Official, pending completion of an addition or during partial occupancy of a structure.

Certificate of Completion

A Certificate of Completion is a permit that ensures that a structure has been built in compliance with all applicable building and zoning regulations. Certificates of Completion are issued for any building activity that might not have an associate use, or for construction which does not involve a structure (such as a pool, sign, or parking lot).

A Certificate of Completion is required for any of the following:

- Use of a parking lot constructed or enlarged and not in conjunction with a building or structure;
- Site changes including but not limited to landscaping, parking lots, façade changes in a design district, or a change to an existing site that is not done in conjunction with a building or structure that requires a Building Permit; or
- Site improvements associated with a telecommunications tower.

It is unlawful to occupy or utilize any structure that does not have a valid Certificate of Completion or Temporary Certificate of Completion.

For more information about Certificates of Completion, please see [Article 3](#) of the UDO.

Temporary Certificate of Completion

Pending the issuance of a permanent Certificate of Completion, a Temporary Certificate of Completion may be issued. The Temporary Certificate of Completion is valid for a period established by the Building Official, pending completion of an addition, or during partial occupancy of a structure.

Sign Permits

The City of College Station requires a [Sign Permit](#) in order to install, erect, move, add to, or alter a sign. All signs must be in conformance with the UDO unless otherwise instructed by the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

A permit is required for the following:

- Apartment/condominium/manufactured home park identification signs;
- Attached signs;
- Development signs;
- Freestanding signs;
- Low profile signs;
- Banners;
- Home occupation signs; and
- Subdivision and area identification signs.

No permit is required for the following signs:

- Real estate, finance, and construction signs;
- Directional traffic control signs; and
- Noncommercial signs.

For more information about Sign Permits, please see [Article 3](#) and [Article 7](#) of the UDO.

Frequently Asked Questions

Commercial Development

1. When do I need a commercial building permit?

A commercial Building Permit is required for new construction (including additions and alterations). A commercial permit is also required for demolition work. The exceptions include single-family detached structures, duplexes, and townhomes; those types of structures require a residential Building Permit.

2. What are the preliminary requirements for pursuing a commercial Building Permit?

Check to ensure that you comply with all zoning and platting requirements, then submit the site plan and required documents for review by the appropriate Staff.

3. What do I have to submit to the Building Department to obtain a plan review?

Submit three (3) comprehensive sets of plans and one (1) set of specifications, if provided, to the Planning & Development Services Department along with a completed [Building Permit Application](#).

4. When can I start construction?

Construction can be started any time after the Building Permit and Development Permit have been issued. A Building Permit expires if work has not started within 180 days from the date the permit was issued.

5. Can I obtain a Foundation Only Permit if complete plans for my project are not ready for submission?

Yes, the building code allows for phased approval of a project. A Foundation Only Permit may be issued by the Building Official under certain circumstances; however, the holder of such permit is proceeding at the holder's risk without assurance that a permit for the entire structure will be granted at a later date.

6. How many building inspections of my construction will be performed? When will the inspections be made?

The total number of inspections for a commercial project varies based on the scope and complexity of the job. Building Inspection personnel will perform inspections within 1 working day from the time the request is called in by the contractor. Construction inspections are typically performed in the following order:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| (1) Plumbing/Sewer Rough | (7) Energy/Insulation |
| (2) Building Foundation (Slab) | (8) Plumbing Final* |
| (3) Electrical Rough* | (9) Electrical Final* |
| (4) Plumbing Top Out* | (10) Mechanical Final* |
| (5) Mechanical Rough* | (11) Building Final |
| (6) Building Frame | |

*Note: The inspections with an asterisk can be performed in any order. However, the electrical rough, mechanical rough, and plumbing top out must be completed prior to the building framing and the electrical final, mechanical final, and plumbing final must be completed prior to the building final.

7. If I am not at the site at the time the inspection is made, how will I know if the work has been approved?

Inspectors leave different colored tags on site to indicate the status of the inspection. If an inspection is made and the work is approved, the inspector will leave a green tag on site; however, if an inspection is made and the work is rejected, a red tag will be left on the site. If you receive a red tag, contact the Planning & Development Services Department for information regarding any corrective action that is required. After the work has been corrected, contact the Planning & Development Services Department for a second inspection. There is a re-inspection fee for all building re-inspections.

8. When may I use and occupy my building?

The structure may be occupied only after all inspections and approvals have been obtained and you have received a Certificate of Occupancy.

9. How do I get my Certificate of Occupancy?

You can get your Certificate of Occupancy from the Planning & Development Services Department after all required inspections have been completed and approved. There is no application or fee required for a Certificate of Occupancy. Commercial Certificates of Occupancy are triggered after a building final has been completed and will be issued after the following departments have inspected the site: Fire Marshall, Planning and Development Services, Development Engineering, Utilities (water/wastewater and electrical), and Public Works (sanitation). These inspections generally occur 1 to 4

days after the appropriate City departments are notified, depending on the size and scope of the project.

10. Do I need special permission to stock, fixture or train employees prior to obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy?

Yes. All fire safety systems must be installed and approved before permission will be granted to stock, fixture, or train employees. Please contact the Building Division to obtain a [permission form](#) prior to stocking, fixturing or training employees.

11. Is it possible to obtain a temporary or conditional Certificate of Occupancy?

Yes. In certain cases the Building Official can issue a temporary or conditional Certificate of Occupancy before the completion of all the work covered by the building permit provided the building or structure can be safely occupied. Temporary or conditional Certificates are intended for special circumstances and are not routinely issued.

Residential Development

1. Under what conditions would I apply for a residential building permit?

A residential permit is required for the construction, alteration, addition to, or demolition of any single-family home (detached), duplex, or townhome. All others, including multi-family residential projects, require a commercial permit.

2. What type of plans will I need to submit for a residential building permit?

One (1) complete set of plans that includes:

- Dimensioned site plan drawn to scale showing all buildings on the lot, driveway, property line boundaries, required setbacks, and all existing easements.
- Landscape Plan with planting legend for duplexes
- Foundation Plan
- Floor Plan
- Elevations
- Structural Details
- Electrical Plan
- Plumbing Plan
- Irrigation Plan

3. When can I begin construction?

You can begin construction once your plans have been approved and the Building Permit has been issued. The permit expires if construction is not started within 180 days of the date the permit is issued.

4. What inspections will be required?

Typically, the construction of a residential unit (as opposed to a remodeling or addition) requires a total of eleven (11) inspections that must be performed in the following order:

(1) Plumbing/Sewer Rough

(7) Energy/Insulation/Good Cents

- (2) Building Foundation
- (3) Electrical Rough*
- (4) Plumbing Top Out*
- (5) Mechanical Rough*
- (6) Building Frame

- (8) Plumbing Final*
- (9) Electrical Final*
- (10) Mechanical Final*
- (11) Building Final

*Note: The inspections with an asterisk can be performed in any order. However, the electrical rough, mechanical rough, and plumbing top out must be completed prior to the building framing and the electrical final, mechanical final, and plumbing final must be completed prior to the building final.

The appropriate contractor will need to contact the Planning & Development Services Department to request each inspection and receive approval prior to proceeding to the next stage. Inspectors leave different colored tags on site to indicate the status of the inspection. If an inspection is made and the work is approved, the inspector will leave a green tag on site. However, if an inspection is made and the work is rejected, a red tag will be left on site. If you receive a red tag, contact the Planning & Development Services Department for information regarding any corrective action that is required. After the work has been corrected, contact the Planning & Development Services Department for a second inspection. There is a re-inspection fee for all re-inspections.

5. When can a dwelling unit be occupied?

After all final inspections have been performed and approval has been obtained, the Planning & Development Services Department will issue a Certificate of Occupancy (CO). After a CO is issued, the unit is ready for occupancy. There is no application required for a CO.

General Development Resources

The following list contains links to development resources. If you have any questions in regards to this information, please contact the Planner on Call in the Planning and Development Services Department.

- [Applications](#)
- [Approved Plant List](#)
- [Building and Development Fees](#)
- [CO Site Inspection Checklist](#)
- [Color Palette](#)
- [Contact Information](#)
- [Engineering and Planning Publications](#)
- [Impact Fees](#)
- [P&DS Transmittal Letter](#)
- [PAC Request Form](#)
- [Site Design Standards](#)
- [Submission Deadlines](#)
- [UDO Use Table](#)