

# **CITY OF GREENVILLE REZONING HANDBOOK**

REZONING PROCESS  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
PROCEDURAL FORMAT,  
GENERAL OUTLINE OF DUTIES  
AND PLANNING CONCEPTS

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# REZONING PROCESS

## PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

### \*\* PROCEDURAL FORMAT

- Call to Order - 6:00 pm
- Membership - Nine (9) City Members (7 regular and 2 alternate). Three (3) County (ETJ area) Members (2 regular and 1 alternate).
- Quorum - Five (5) voting members.
- Voting - On all matters, a majority vote of the qualified members present shall be necessary to pass on any motion.
- Alternate members shall vote only in the absence of a regular member.
- Authority - Recommendation (only) to City Council concerning REZONINGS, text amendments, ETJ extensions, street closings, street name changes involving honorary designations, comprehensive plan (text/map) amendments.
- Jurisdiction - The City of Greenville exercises planning, zoning, subdivision and building inspection authority within the city limits and in its extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) area.

### Instructions to Audience/Applicants (by Chairman)

1. (Call) of agenda items.
2. (Request) City Staff to present background information and introductory facts relative to the specific case.
3. (Request) the Applicant or authorized representative to present information in support of the petition.

The Commission requests that the applicant address the following items with respect to the current and proposed zoning. **NOTE** - The Commission and City Council will consider all

land uses and methods of development allowed within the respective zoning districts. Reference to a specific plan of development or specific land use, either verbally or by illustration, is therefore considered irrelevant and should not be discussed.

**ITEMS:**

1. Conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Compatibility with surrounding zoning pattern(s).
3. Compatibility with existing and future adjacent/area land uses.
4. Impact on area streets and thoroughfares.
5. Other factors which advance the public health, safety and welfare.

4. City Staff comment period; additional information and comments prior public testimony.
5. (Request) that those persons wishing to speak in favor of the request to please come forward. (See note)
6. (Request) that those persons wishing to speak in opposition of the request to please come forward. (See note)
7. (Request) that those persons wishing to rebut previous testimony; first in favor of then in opposition to the request to please come forward.

**NOTE:** Groups of persons such as homeowners associations are requested to appoint a spokesperson.

Specific issues either in favor of, or in opposition to the request shall be noted and recorded by the Commission, and in the interest of time should not be repeated by subsequent speakers. Comments should be reserved to new information only.

8. City Staff available for additional comment as necessary and on requests of the Commission.
9. (Call) for discussion by Commission Membership.
10. (Call) for motion to approve or deny the request.
11. (Call) for a second to the motion on the floor. Absent a second the Chairman shall entertain a new motion and second.
12. (Call) for further discussion by the Commission Membership.
13. (Call) for voice vote on the item. If the vote is not unanimous a hand vote shall be recorded.
14. (Advise) the audience and applicant of the action taken and of the scheduled City Council public hearing for final consideration where applicable (REZONINGS, text amendments, etc.) or appeal procedure of a final action (preliminary plats, special use permits).

### *Meeting Outline*

- Regular Business
- Approval of previous meeting(s) minutes (motion and vote)
  - Instructions to Audience/Applicants (Chairman):

Staff Presentation

Persons To Speak In Favor (30 minute time limit)

Persons To Speak In Opposition (30 minute time limit)

Commission Discussion

Motion

Vote - possible actions: Approve

Deny

\* Continue

\* Maximum period is 65 days (may continue twice)

If the Planning and Zoning Commission fails to submit a report within the above period, it shall be deemed to have approved the proposed amendment.

\*\* This procedural format is an administrative guide only and not an officially adopted Rules of Procedure or amendment to any adopted policy of the City of Greenville.

## *Planning and Zoning Commission Policy on Public Comment Period*

The public comment period, reserved for testimony in support of and in opposition to an item before the Commission, shall be allocated as follows, unless otherwise agreed to by consensus of the Commission:

### **1. Initial Comment Period**

Comments should be limited to the introduction of new information not previously addressed by earlier testimony.

- a) Petitioner or his designated representative (ONLY ONE PERSON): Five (5) minutes.
- b) Other interested persons in support: Three (3) minutes each.
- c) Designated representative for interested persons in opposition: Five (5) minutes.
- d) Interested persons in opposition: Three (3) minutes each.

The City's authority to create a planning agency is set out in Chapter 160D of the N.C. General Statutes as follows:

### **160D-301. Planning boards.**

(a) Composition. - A local government may by ordinance provide for the appointment and compensation of a planning board or may designate one or more boards or commissions to perform the duties of a planning board. A planning board established pursuant to this section may include, but shall not be limited to, one or more of the following:

- (1) A planning board of any size or composition deemed appropriate, organized in any manner deemed appropriate; provided, however, the board shall have at least three members.
- (2) A joint planning board created by two or more local governments pursuant to Part 1 of Article 20 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes.
- (b) Duties. - A planning board may be assigned the following powers and duties:
  - (1) To prepare, review, maintain, monitor, and periodically update and recommend to the governing board a comprehensive plan, and such other plans as deemed appropriate, and conduct ongoing related research, data collection, mapping, and analysis.
  - (2) To facilitate and coordinate citizen engagement and participation in the planning process.
  - (3) To develop and recommend policies, ordinances, development regulations, administrative procedures, and other means for carrying out plans in a coordinated and efficient manner.

- (4) To advise the governing board concerning the implementation of plans, including, but not limited to, review and comment on all zoning text and map amendments as required by G.S. 160D-604.
- (5) To exercise any functions in the administration and enforcement of various means for carrying out plans that the governing board may direct.
- (6) To provide a preliminary forum for review of quasi-judicial decisions, provided that no part of the forum or recommendation may be used as a basis for the deciding board.
- (7) To perform any other related duties that the governing board may direct. (2019-111, s. 2.4; 2020-3, s. 4.33(a); 2020-25, s. 51(a), (b), (d).)

In addition to its other duties, the City Council may designate the Commission to perform any or all of the duties of a Board of Adjustment.

The Commission is also authorized by ordinance (Sec. 9-5-16, Subdivisions) to act in lieu of City Council concerning the final approval of all preliminary and final subdivision plats. The Subdivision Review Board (SRB), an administrative board of City and Greenville Utilities (GUCO) staff, has been designated to act in lieu of the Commission concerning minor and final subdivision plats. The SRB's authority is restricted to the administration of existing Commission and Council policy and approval of final subdivision maps pursuant to commission approved preliminary plats.

Actions of the SRB may be appealed to the Commission and all subdivision related actions of the Commission may be appealed directly to the applicable court of jurisdiction as provided by law.

The most common and publicly visible role fulfilled by the Commission is in the review and recommendation of items to City Council for final action. These duties include:

- (1) Rezoning Applications
- (2) ETJ Extensions
- (3) Zoning, Subdivision and Other Development Code Text Amendments
- (4) Comprehensive Plan (text/map) Adoption/Amendments
- (5) Street Closings
- (6) Street Name Changes Involving Honorary Designation
- (7) Development Policy and Administrative Procedures

In this role, the Commission functions only in an advisory capacity. As reflected in case notes of the NC General Statutes, the Commission has no legislative, judicial or quasi-judicial power and its recommendations do not restrict or otherwise affect the legislative power of the City Council. The City Council acts in the exercise of its legislative function in determining whether the Commission's recommendations in regards to the enactment of zoning ordinances should be followed.

In this advisory role, the Commission acts as the initial sounding board for public input on development issues. The Commission, a coalition knowledgeable of development related matters, gathers facts, information and opinions and formulates a recommendation for Council consideration. City Council utilizes this input and other information obtained through the public hearing process to make informed decisions concerning these legislative actions.

The Commission and City Council may, in addition to available written materials and public input, base their decision on other commonly known facts or information not included in the record of the meeting or public hearing.

## ZONING MAP

**This map depicts the specific boundaries of the zoning districts.**

The Official Zoning Map of the City of Greenville has been adopted by ordinance of City Council and made part of the Zoning Regulations. The zoning map **applies to both those areas within the city limits and within the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ)**, which may extend a mile or more beyond the city limits.

Since the original adoption of the [Greenville] zoning regulations in 1947 the zoning map (as amended) has defined the zoning district boundaries as established by ordinance of City Council.

**The official map has evolved over time from a hand drawn mylar film reproducible to the computer generated graphic information system (GIS) format in use today.** Each subsequently adopted map has been an exact copy (as was practicable) of the previous map unless specifically amended by ordinance.

The current "official zoning map" was adopted by City Council on February 13, 1997 per ordinance 97-17. At that time, the previous zoning map was digitized using the City's graphic information system (GIS) and the coverage was overlaid onto a county tax parcel (GIS formatted) base map. All of the district boundaries shown on the current map are either scaled from previously adopted maps or are based on legal descriptions included in zoning map amendment ordinances. The resulting map is more accurate than was possible in the past. Although the map can be view at virtually any scale, due to the computer ability to zoom in/out, the official map scale has been set at 1 inch equals 400 feet. For purposes of zoning district boundary interpretation, the 1 to 400 ratio will be utilized.

The current "GIS based zoning map" is officially a black line coverage printed on mylar film, however, **color patterns representing the various districts have been added by staff for illustrative purposes.**

**Where the location of district boundaries on the official zoning map is uncertain and where no specific ordinance description is found to exist, the following rules apply:**

- (a) ***Streets, rights-of-way and easements.*** Boundaries indicated on the zoning map as approximately following the centerline of a street, highway, railroad, right-of-way, utility easement, stream or riverbed, or of such lines extended, are construed to be such district boundaries.
- (b) ***Lot lines.*** Boundaries indicated as approximately following platted lot lines are construed as following such lot lines.
- (c) ***Political boundaries.*** Boundaries indicated as approximately following political boundaries are construed as following the political boundaries.



Where any public street or alley is officially closed or abandoned by City Council, the regulations [zoning] applicable to parcels of abutting property shall apply to that portion of the street or alley added to the abutting property by virtue of such vacation or abandonment.

**In case any further uncertainty exists, the board of adjustment shall interpret the intent of the map as to location of such boundaries.**

The districts can only be amended by City Council following review and recommendation of the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council public hearing. Amendments to the Official Zoning Map are in fact an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance.

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

### **160D-501. Plans.**

(a) Requirements for Zoning. - As a condition of adopting and applying zoning regulations under this Chapter, a local government shall adopt and reasonably maintain a comprehensive plan or land-use plan.

A comprehensive plan sets forth goals, policies, and programs intended to guide the present and future physical, social, and economic development of the jurisdiction. A land-use plan uses text and maps to designate the future use or reuse of land. A comprehensive or land-use plan is intended to guide coordinated, efficient, and orderly development within the planning and development regulation jurisdiction based on an analysis of present and future needs.

A local government may prepare and adopt other plans as deemed appropriate. This may include, but is not limited to, small area plans, neighborhood plans, hazard mitigation plans, transportation plans, housing plans, and recreation and open space plans.

(b) Comprehensive Plan Contents. - A comprehensive plan may, among other topics, address any of the following as determined by the local government:

- (1) Issues and opportunities facing the local government, including consideration of trends, values expressed by citizens, community vision, and guiding principles for growth and development.
- (2) The pattern of desired growth and development and civic design, including the location, distribution, and characteristics of future land uses, urban form, utilities, and transportation networks.
- (3) Employment opportunities, economic development, and community development.
- (4) Acceptable levels of public services and infrastructure to support development, including water, waste disposal, utilities, emergency services, transportation, education, recreation, community facilities, and other public services, including plans and policies for provision of and financing for public infrastructure.
- (5) Housing with a range of types and affordability to accommodate persons and households of all types and income levels.
- (6) Recreation and open spaces.
- (7) Mitigation of natural hazards such as flooding, winds, wildfires, and unstable lands.
- (8) Protection of the environment and natural resources, including agricultural resources, mineral resources, and water and air quality.

- (9) Protection of significant architectural, scenic, cultural, historical, or archaeological resources.
- (10) Analysis and evaluation of implementation measures, including regulations, public investments, and educational programs.
- (c) Adoption and Effect of Plans. - Plans shall be adopted by the governing board with the advice and consultation of the planning board. Adoption and amendment of a comprehensive or land-use plan is a legislative decision and shall follow the process mandated for zoning text amendments set by G.S. 160D-601. Plans adopted under this Chapter may be undertaken and adopted as part of or in conjunction with plans required under other statutes, including, but not limited to, the plans required by G.S. 113A-110. Plans adopted under this Chapter shall be advisory in nature without independent regulatory effect. Plans adopted under this Chapter do not expand, diminish, or alter the scope of authority for development regulations adopted under this Chapter. Plans adopted under this Chapter shall be considered by the planning board and governing board when considering proposed amendments to zoning regulations as required by G.S. 160D-604 and G.S. 160D-605.

The Comprehensive Plan **is a document adopted by the city council, which provides direction in the development of the city.** It is a statement by the city as to **how the community should look and function in the future.**

The Comprehensive Plan is **not a zoning ordinance, but it does provide a legal basis for decision making.** The North Carolina General Statutes stated that **zoning regulations should be made in accordance with a comprehensive plan.** When challenged in court, development codes are more likely to be upheld when based on a comprehensive plan rather than as ad hoc decisions.

The Comprehensive Plan is **a statement of policies.** These policies tell the public and elected officials what actions are likely to be taken in given situations. The plan is to **function as a guide.** It **does not hold the same status as the zoning ordinance,** which provides for penalties if violated.

The Comprehensive Plan is **composed of elements,** which affect the physical development of the city, such as **housing, transportation, land use, recreation, utilities and the environment.** Each element has an **identification of goals and recommended actions to achieve them.** Because **the plan attempts to address so many issues,** it is **not uncommon for there to be conflicting policies.** The **key to a successful comprehensive plan is to find the proper balance** when such situations occur.

The Comprehensive **Plan is general, not site specific.** It is **important to recognize the intent** behind the plan and to **take actions, which support that intent.**

**The Comprehensive Plan seeks to provide insight into the long-range future of the community.** Those interested in investing in the city often review the comprehensive plan to learn more about the community and to help with investment decisions.

The Comprehensive Plan performs an important role in shaping the future of the City. **The plan is the product of a lengthy public process, involving large numbers of citizens and compromises among competing interests.** Once in place, the plan is an important tool in guiding public and private decision-makers on issues, which will affect the city for many years. **Deviations from the**

plan should be possible when needed, but not necessarily easy.

The City of Greenville's Comprehensive Plan is entitled "**HORIZONS 2026: Greenville's Community Plan**", originally adopted on January 9, 1992 was updated on February 12, 2004 by the Greenville City Council per Ordinance No. 04-10.

On September 8, 2016, it was recently re-written and adopted.

The Comprehensive Plan may be amended from time to time through any public participation process described by City Council, provided however at minimum, following a review and recommendation of the Planning and Zoning Commission and a public hearing of City Council.

## **FUTURE LAND USE AND CHARACTER MAP**

The Greenville City Code per Ordinance No., 97-73 originally adopted the Future Land Use Plan Map on August 14, 1997.

**The Future Land Use and Character Map serves as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan, Horizons.** It is stressed that the land use plan map is based to a large extent on the goals and objectives outlined in the Horizons plan and is not intended to be a stand-alone document.

The Elements of Urban Form are defined and described in detail in the Horizons plan. **The arrangement of land use patterns depicted on the Future Land Use and Character Map are configured to support the City's Urban Form Policies and in consideration of projected need.**

The Future Land Use and Character Map includes 16 separate land use categories. Each of these categories is associated with 1 or more of the 28 zoning districts or as conservation/open space. Therefore, **the Future Land Use and Character Map, in many cases, represents a range of available land use options to be evaluated on a site specific case by case basis at the time of zoning consideration.** A description of the allowable uses for each zoning district can be found in the Zoning Ordinance (Section 9-4-78. Table of Uses).

**The Future Land Use and Character Map depicts a desired or optimum pattern of land use for vacant as well as developed land.** For land areas that are already developed, the desired land use may not be consistent with the existing land use. In cases where the planning process resulted in a desired land use that deviated from the existing land use, the preferred land use pattern is indicated. The preferred land use pattern was, at the time of plan adoption, considered more suitable and compatible with the long range goals and objectives of the City.

**The Future Land Use and Character Map provides a visual illustration** of the Urban Form Policies set out in the Horizons document, **however, the land use patterns depicted on the plan are not site (dimensionally) specific.** Where land use patterns appear to follow base map property lines, such description should be considered as general and the City's Urban Form Policies outlined in the Horizons plan will control. Unlike the zoning map where district boundaries are described by specific course and distance the **Future Land Use and Character Map boundaries are general. It is important to recognize the intent behind the plan and to take actions, which support that intent.**

Any amendment to the Future Land Use and Character Map is an amendment to Horizons 2026: Greenville's Community Plan.

## **WHO MAY PETITION TO REZONE PROPERTY:**

A petition for an amendment to either the Zoning Ordinance of the city or the official zoning map of the city may be initiated by the City Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, any department or agency of the city, or the owner or authorized agent of the owner of any property within the zoning jurisdiction of the city that desires an amendment to either the Zoning Ordinance or map which would affect property in which he or she has a vested property right recognized under existing law. In accordance with G.S.160D-601, no amendments to the zoning ordinance or the official zoning map that downzone property shall be initiated nor shall they be enforceable without the written consent of all property owners whose property is the subject of the down-zoning amendment unless the down-zoning amendment is initiated by the city.

## **ROLE OF PETITIONER**

The petitioner, or authorized representative, shall appear before the Commission and City Council and present compelling information to justify the need for and appropriateness of the proposed rezoning.

In the presentation of such information, the petitioner should address the following issues:

1. Conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Compatibility with surrounding zoning pattern(s).
3. Compatibility with existing and future adjacent/area land uses.
4. Impact on area streets and thoroughfares.
5. Other factors which advance the public health, safety and welfare.

The Commission and City Council will consider all land uses and methods of development allowed within the respective zoning districts. Reference to a specific plan of development or specific land use, either verbally or by illustration, is therefore considered irrelevant and should not be discussed.

## **ROLE OF CITY STAFF**

City staff serves in an advisory capacity to both the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council on planning and development related matters.

Staff will assist the Commission by presenting information from zoning maps, adopted plans of the City, zoning and subdivision regulations and other codes or ordinances that apply in the particular case. Staff makes recommendations to the Commission to either “approve” or “deny” a request based on the Comprehensive Plan and the Future Land Use and Character Map.

If the Commission wishes to approve the request, the member making a motion to approve or deny a request shall state the appropriate motion set forth below and such motion, second and subsequent vote shall be included in the official minutes as the written recommendation of the Commission.

**For motions on amendments that are in compliance to the Comprehensive Plan**

**TO APPROVE:** \_\_\_\_\_ Motion to recommend approval of the proposed amendment, to advise that it is consistent with the comprehensive plan and to adopt the staff report which addresses plan consistency and other matters.

**TO DENY:** \_\_\_\_\_ Motion to recommend denial of the proposed amendment, to advise that it is inconsistent with the comprehensive plan and to adopt the staff report which addresses plan consistency and other matters.

**For motions on amendments that are not in compliance to the Comprehensive Plan**

**TO APPROVE:** \_\_\_\_\_ Motion to recommend approval of the proposed amendment, to advise that, although the proposed amendment is not consistent with the comprehensive plan, in this instance it is an appropriate zoning classification, and to adopt the staff report which addresses plan consistency.

**TO DENY:** \_\_\_\_\_ Motion to recommend denial of the proposed amendment, to advise that, although the proposed amendment is consistent with the comprehensive plan, there is a more appropriate zoning classification, and to adopt the staff report which addresses plan consistency.

It is not the responsibility of city staff or of area property owners to present compelling information to justify approval or denial of any rezoning petition.

It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to justify the need for and appropriateness of any rezoning.

## **CONTRACT ZONING**

Contract zoning is prohibited by State Law.

With regard to a zoning action, the City may not enter into or acknowledge any contract, agreement, covenant or other restriction which limits the use of land consistent with the codes and ordinances of the City.

Contracts between private parties shall not be considered by the Commission or City Council in making any recommendation or decision.

The Commission and City Council will consider all land uses and methods of development allowed within the respective zoning districts.

Reference by the applicant to a specific plan of development or specific land use, either verbally or by illustration, is therefore considered irrelevant and should not be discussed.

The absence of an objection from adjoining or interested parties based on a private party contract shall be sufficient to convey the private parties mutual agreement on the issue in question. Such contracts are not enforceable by the City and shall have no effect on the validity of the legislative action.

## **SPOT ZONING**

Illegal spot zoning is the arbitrary zoning of a tract or parcel which benefits or burdens such property in a manner uncommon to area properties.

Arbitrary classification is the key in determining whether illegal spot zoning has occurred. Zoning in accordance with an adopted comprehensive plan and designed to promote a legitimate public purpose is not an arbitrary action.

The North Carolina Supreme Court has determined that, if there is a reasonable basis for spot zoning, it is legal and valid. Relevant factors for showing a reasonable basis, the court said, include the size of the tract; the compatibility of the rezoning with the comprehensive plan; the benefits and detriments to the parcels owner, neighbors, and surrounding community; and the relationship of the uses envisioned under the new zoning and the uses currently present in adjacent tracts.

## **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

### **160D-603. Citizen comments.**

Subject to the limitations of this Chapter, zoning regulations may from time to time be amended, supplemented, changed, modified, or repealed. If any resident or property owner in the local government submits a written statement regarding a proposed amendment, modification, or repeal to a zoning regulation, including a text or map amendment that has been properly initiated as provided in G.S. 160D-601, to the clerk to the board at least two business days prior to the proposed vote on such change, the clerk to the board shall deliver such written statement to the governing board.