



LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Step One

Jurisdiction:

In order for a property to be developed pursuant to Town standards, it must be within the jurisdiction of the Town of Mount Pleasant. If a property is not within the Town, annexation must be pursued.

Annexation:

A property subject for annexation into the Town must first meet the State's legal requirement that it is contiguous to property already within the jurisdiction of the Town. Contiguity is met if one could take a step from one property onto the other, except for "intervening connectors," i.e. streets and waterbodies. If the contiguity standard cannot be met, a request for annexation cannot be made. [ref. SC Code of Laws, Title 5, [Chapter 3](#)]

Comprehensive Plan Amendment:

The Town's Comprehensive Plan provides land use designations for each parcel within the planning area (currently from the Ravenel Bridge to the Steed Creek Road area). The land use designation establishes residential density (number of dwelling units per acre) and is generally the basis for each parcel's zoning district classification; the zoning classification determines which uses are allowed and, as such, the land use designation should be considered with any zoning or rezoning request. In certain instances, an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan may be required for consistency with the requested zoning or use, or to establish or change density. The Comprehensive Plan is not regulatory; as such, properties may be zoned in a different manner than what is suggested by the Comprehensive Plan.

Zoning:

Zoning is based on a property's Comprehensive Plan land use designation, which also provides the basis for the density that can be achieved on a particular property. If no specific zoning district classification is requested at the time the petition for annexation is submitted, the "default" zoning assigned is R-1, Low Density Residential, unless the land use designation is Natural Open Space, Recreation Open Space, Rural Conservation, or Community Conservation. [ref. Zoning Code Section § [156.302](#)]

Rezoning:

If the current zoning designation of the property does not allow the type of use desired by the property owner/developer, then a rezoning request must be made.

Planned Development (PD) Amendment:

If the property is already part of a Planned Development zoning district but such PD does not allow for the desired use(s) or development standards, a PD amendment is required. Any request pertaining to the establishment of a PD zoning district or changes to an existing PD ordinance shall be considered an amendment to the Zoning Chapter. This type of request simply amends the existing PD ordinance; the permitted uses or development standards change, but the zoning designation does not. [ref. § [156.305](#)]

Approval Process:

- The Planning Commission holds a public hearing on the zoning request and makes a recommendation to the Planning & Development Committee of Town Council;

- The Planning & Development Committee of Council makes a recommendation to Town Council;
- Town Council takes action. An ordinance associated with an annexation, zoning, PD amendment, or Comprehensive Plan amendment request must have two readings at least six days apart, though first and final readings generally occur one month apart at the regular monthly Town Council meetings.

[Please refer to [Zoning Request Process](#) for further details.]

Step Two

Impact Assessment & Conceptual Plan approval:

The purpose of an Impact Assessment is to provide a basis for assessing a major development's favorable or unfavorable impact on the Town's overall environment and infrastructure, natural ecology, and economic, historic, social, and related public resources. An Impact Assessment is required when one or more of the following conditions are met:

- The proposed development is comprised of residential uses that are projected to generate more than 75 peak hour vehicle trips;
- The proposed development is comprised of 40,000 square feet or more of nonresidential area *and* is projected to generate more than 75 peak hour vehicle trips;
- The proposed development is comprised of a combination of residential and nonresidential uses such that the residential component only is projected to generate more than 75 peak hour vehicle trips *and* the nonresidential component consists of 40,000 square feet or more of area.

The Conceptual Plan is required to show an overall development concept and should include such information as lot arrangement, streets, and open space. The Conceptual Plan is not required to contain a high level of detail; however, developments consisting solely of a residential subdivision may utilize the Sketch Plan, as provided in § [155.022](#) and § [155.029](#) of the Land Development Regulations, as the required Conceptual Plan. In this regard, Sketch Plans approved in conjunction with Impact Assessment approval will not require additional approval prior to Preliminary Plat submittal, unless significantly altered. [ref. § [156.054](#)]

Approval Process:

The Planning Commission makes a recommendation for approval, approval with conditions, or denial, to the Planning & Development Committee of Council; the Planning & Development Committee makes a recommendation for approval, approval with conditions, or denial to Town Council; Town Council takes action. Impact Assessments & Conceptual Plans are not adopted by ordinance and, as such, do not require readings.

Step Three

Sketch Plan approval:

For fee-simple residential subdivisions, Sketch Plan approval is required prior to submittal of a Preliminary Plat. The Sketch Plan is required to show such information as lot arrangement, lot size, streets, easements, open space, significant trees, and zoning information and is intended to show that all required elements can be accommodated on the site. It provides a higher level of detail than the Conceptual Plan. [ref. Land Development Regulations Section § [155.020](#) et seq.]

Approval Process:

The Planning Commission approves, conditionally approves, or denies Sketch Plans, unless the Sketch Plan is submitted with an Impact Assessment in lieu of a Conceptual Plan. In such cases, the Planning Commission makes a recommendation for approval, approval with conditions, or denial of the Sketch Plan, and Town Council takes action.

Step Four

Preliminary Plat approval:

For fee-simple residential subdivisions, Preliminary Plat approval is required prior to construction. Preliminary Plat approval allows the developer to proceed with installation of the site improvements, the marking of lots and easements, and the preparation of the final plat. This step must be completed prior to clearing, grading, or making any street or other improvements, or installing any utilities. [ref. § [155.020](#) et seq.]

Approval Process:

The Planning Commission approves, conditionally approves, or denies Preliminary Plats.

Step Five

Install infrastructure

Final construction authorization is provided through the release of the Town Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) letter. This letter is a prerequisite to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit administered by the South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control's Office of Ocean & Coastal Resource Management (SCDHEC-OCRM). A Town Clearing and Grading permit application is not complete until the NPDES letter is received and all Stormwater Pollution Prevention measures are in place. Coordination is necessary with Town Field Inspectors prior to implementing and throughout the installation of site improvements. This includes, but is not limited to, roads, utilities, and drainage improvements.

Step Six

Final Plat approval and recording:

Final Plat approval will not be considered until all required on-site improvements have been completed, inspected, and approved. The Final Plat must incorporate all modifications required by the Planning Commission in its review of the Preliminary Plat. Once approved and signed by the Planning Director or designee, the property owner/developer is responsible for ensuring the plat is registered with Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyance (RMC) office. The recorded copy is to be presented to the Department of Planning & Development to demonstrate this step has been completed in order to apply for a building construction and/or conveyance of any lots within the subdivision.