

City of Charleston, South Carolina

Guide to Business

A publication of the
Department of Economic Development
As a project of the
Central Business District Revitalization Commission
Revision January 2005

The City of Charleston is an Equal Opportunity Employer

About this Guide:

The focus of this guide is to provide new and existing businesses in Charleston, South Carolina, with a general overview of the regulations and procedures necessary in order to operate in the city. Helping the new business wishing to start operations in the City of Charleston, as well as the existing company that may need to expand or relocate, is of prime interest to the City of Charleston.

Because of the uniqueness of each business situation, the material included is intended to provide an overview of the city's zoning, permitting, and regulation process. This information cannot anticipate specific problems or special circumstances. For this reason, the information cannot be considered a substitute for direct contact with city officials in the various departments referenced. It offers a framework for understanding the sequence and relationships of the various steps involved in meeting city regulations.

Before buying or leasing a building for business, the Zoning Division of the Department of Design, Development and Preservation should be consulted to assure that the proposed use of the property is permissible by the City of Charleston Zoning Ordinance.

Due to the contributions and cooperation from various sources, this guide is made available to the public and is meant to be a valuable resource for entities doing business in the City of Charleston.

This Guide to Business is intended to serve all persons when conducting business in and with the City of Charleston, South Carolina. Your comments are welcomed.

Dear Business Person:

Business is the backbone of the Charleston economy. In an effort to help to foster success for businesses in Charleston, the City of Charleston, in cooperation with citizen volunteers, has developed this *Guide to Business*. The guide helps to provide basic information concerning the process or procedures for businesses operating in Charleston.

The City offers a quality of life we all enjoy today because over the years, procedures have been established in the interest of maintaining the character and identity of Charleston. This guide is meant to provide an understanding of the process in an effort to help business people to gain an appreciation for the City and how it operates. Working together, businesses can operate successfully and the City can continue to be a place in which we all enjoy working, playing, living, and visiting.

Because this guide provides a basic framework of information, you are encouraged to make contact with the appropriate City department early in your business planning process. By doing this, you will have the necessary people engaged in the process to provide guidance and direction as you proceed.

The City of Charleston welcomes you and your business.

Most sincerely yours,

Joseph P. Riley, Jr.
Mayor, City of Charleston

JPR,jr/lj

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I. Site Information

Department of Design, Development and Preservation

75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor, Charleston, South Carolina, 29401

(843) 724-3765

Yvonne Fortenberry, Director

This department oversees the urban design, preservation and land development of the City of Charleston. These activities include historic preservation, architecture and urban design, and zoning administration. The department also staffs and advises the Planning Commission, Boards of Zoning Appeals-Zoning and Site Design, Board of Architectural Review, the Commercial Corridor Design Review Board, and the Civic Design Center.

Urban Design and Preservation Division & Zoning Division

75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor, Charleston, South Carolina, 29401

(843) 724-3781

Lee Batchelder, Zoning Administrator

Eddie Bello, Urban Design and Preservation Architect

I.A. Zoning:

Before buying or leasing a building for business, the Zoning Division of the Department of Design, Development and Preservation should be consulted to assure that the proposed use of the property is permissible by the City of Charleston Zoning Ordinance.

The Zoning Division administers and enforces the City's Zoning Ordinance which regulates the use of property. All new construction must comply with zoning regulations including parking, landscaping and tree protection requirements. The Zoning Division, prior to issuance of a building permit for installation, must first approve all signs visible from a public right-of-way. The Zoning Division must also approve applications for certificates of occupancy.

For additional information or questions, you may contact the Zoning Division at 724-3781 or 973-7243, or you may go on-line to www.charlestoncity.info to see the zoning ordinance and obtain application forms.

I.B. Board of Architectural Review (BAR):

The Board of Architectural Review (BAR) was established in 1931. As stated in the City of Charleston Zoning Ordinance, the purpose of this board is “the preservation and protection of the old historic or architecturally worthy structures and quaint neighborhoods, which impart a distinct aspect to the City of Charleston, the state and the nation.” Thus, the BAR reviews all exterior alterations visible from any public right-of-way. The BAR consists of seven members assisted by the City’s Urban Design and Preservation Division.

For more information, contact the Urban Design and Preservation Division of the Department of Design, Development and Preservation.

1. BAR Guidelines:

The BAR has jurisdiction over all buildings in the Old and Historic District regardless of age or rating in the Architectural Inventories, as well as new construction. In the Old City District (between Line Street and the Old and Historic District), new construction and buildings over 100 years of age, or rated category 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the Architectural Inventories, also fall under the purview of the BAR. In addition, the BAR has jurisdiction over those buildings individually listed in the City's Landmark Overlay District (individually listed properties outside the Old and Historic and the Old City Districts), as well as demolition of any building over 75 years old south of Mt. Pleasant Street. When making a determination of the appropriateness of an application, the BAR, as well as the division staff, generally follows *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.

Please be sure to check with City staff prior to beginning any work. They are available to answer any questions and to help the process run smoothly.

2. BAR District Map

See Page 4

I.C. Commercial Corridor Design Review Board (CCDRB):

Effective June 1, 1999, all new non-residential developments and multi-family developments with 8 units or more, fronting on the following roads, became subject to the requirements of the Commercial Corridor Design Review Board. In addition, the Board reviews demolition of buildings 50 years and older. The Board meets on the second and fourth Thursday of each month. Contact the Department of Design, Development and Preservation for more information.

Ashley River Road
Bees Ferry Road
Bohicket Road
Cainhoy Road
Citadel Haven Drive
Clements Ferry Road
Daniel Island Drive
Dupont Road (Savannah Highway
to Sam Rittenberg Boulevard)
Fairchild Street
Folly Road
Glenn McConnell Parkway
Harborview Road
Henry Tecklenburg Drive

Maybank Highway
Meeting Street (outside Old & Historic Dist.)
Morrison Drive
Old Town Road(S.C. 171)
Orleans Road (Savannah Highway to
Savage Road)
River Landing Drive
River Road
Rutledge Avenue (outside Old & Historic Dist.)
Saint Andrews Blvd
Sam Rittenberg Boulevard. (S.C. 7)
Savage Road
Savannah Highway (S.C. 17)
Seven Farms Road (including off-ramps
from I-526 to Seven Farms Road)

Highway 41	Shelby Ray Court
Interstate 26	Skylark Drive
Island Park Drive	Thomas Island Drive
James Island Expressway	Town Center Drive (aka West Ashley
King Street (outside Old & Historic Dist.)	Town Center Drive)
Main Road	Wappoo Road (Savannah Highway to
Mark Clark Expressway (I-526)	Sam Rittenberg Boulevard)
Mary Ader Avenue	Wesley Drive
West Wildcat Boulevard	West Ashley Circle

I.D. Civic Design Center

85 Calhoun Street, Charleston, South Carolina 29401
 (843) 958-6416
 Michael Maher, Director of the Civic Design Center

The Charleston Civic Design Center is an urban design initiative of the City of Charleston to promote a positive vision for the future of the City. The CCDC is the result of the leadership of Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. and the desire to elevate the discourse on urban design in the city. Its formation was a major recommendation of the Downtown Plan and the Downtown Partnership as a means to implementing the plan’s urban design goals.

The role of the CCDC is to enhance the quality of life in Charleston by engaging the community in creating a dynamic urban design direction for the City. The Center collaborates with citizens, neighborhood organizations, property owners, developers, interest groups, design professionals, city departments and elected officials to build upon the city’s progressive traditions and to promote the highest standards for community design. The CCDC helps to guide citizen involvement towards a productive definition of Charleston’s identity, promoting a forum for public dialog by sponsoring lectures, symposia, exhibitions, and design workshops. It engages difficult urban design challenges for the future of the City, with an integrated urban design studio that works across disciplines to foster innovation and sensitivity in promoting the best Charleston possible.

The Center aims to demonstrate in concept and in detail how civic discourse can bridge often-divergent commitments: historic preservation and urban progress; neighborhood stabilization and gentrification; quality of life and economic development; continuity and change. In this way, a more inclusive and integrative approach to making the City can flourish and raise the processes of urban design and community development in Charleston to new levels of civic art.

The Charleston Civic Design Center is organized as a division of the City of Charleston’s Department of Design, Development and Preservation and receives additional funding through grants and in-kind contributions. Supplemental support and citizen participation are essential to further the CCDC’s mission.

MAP

II. Permits/Licenses/Inspections

Department of Public Service

75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor, Charleston, South Carolina 29401

(843) 724-3754

Laura Cabiness, Director

The Department of Public Service provides expert services that enhance public safety and health through maintenance of the public rights-of-way, building construction inspection, stormwater management, environmental code enforcement and refuse collection.

II.A. Inspections Division

Douglas M. Smits, C.B.O., Building and Fire Official

(843) 724-7433

The Inspections Division has three major functions - construction related permitting and inspections, fire inspections and substandard housing inspections. This division can be reached Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

1. Inspection Approval Process

Prior to any construction related permits being issued, approvals from the Inspections Division, Zoning Division, Board of Architectural Review and/or Engineering Division may be necessary. For food service establishments, approval from the Charleston Commissioner of Public Works (regarding sizing of grease traps and impact fees) and the Sanitation Division (regarding disposal of refuse) is also required.

2. Contractor Requirements

All contractors who will be performing construction-related work must be appropriately licensed in the discipline in which they are permitted to perform work. For example, only licensed gas installers are permitted to perform work on a natural gas system. In order to obtain a license, contractors must first register with Charleston County Building Services at 405 Bridge View Drive, Room A113, North Charleston, South Carolina, (843) 202-6930. Contractors with trade specific examinations (i.e. general construction, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, gas, roofing and others) must first successfully complete the appropriate trade examination prior to being able to obtain the Charleston County registration.

3. Contractor Requirements - Commercial

For contractors wishing to perform building-related construction on commercial facilities in excess of \$5,000.00, a license from the South Carolina Contractor's Licensing Board is required. For electrical, plumbing, mechanical or gas installations in excess of \$5,000.00 on a commercial structure, a trade specific license from the

South Carolina Contractor's Licensing Board is also required. This agency may be reached at (803) 896-4686.

4. Property Owners of Commercial Establishments - Construction Requirements

Property owners of commercial establishments may also perform building-related work on their own property as long as the dollar amount of the work to be performed does not equal or exceed \$5,000.00 non-structural or non-mechanical. Only a South Carolina licensed general contractor may perform building-related work in excess of \$5,000.00 on commercial properties. Electrical, plumbing, mechanical, gas and fire system work on commercial properties or rental properties may only be performed by contractors appropriately licensed in these respective trades.

5. Adopted Building Related Codes

The City of Charleston currently enforces the 2003 edition of the International Codes, International Mechanical Code, International Fuel Gas Code, International Plumbing Code and the International Fire Prevention Code. The city also enforces the 2002 National Electrical Code. The City will commence enforcement of the 2003 International Residential Code on 7/1/05.

The Inspections Division is responsible for enforcing:

- Flood damage prevention and control ordinance as it relates to building
- The SC regulations of the Board for Barrier Free Design pertaining to accessibility for the physically disabled
- Fire district requirements in the Code of the City of Charleston that apply to property zoned anything except residential

Codes may be reviewed at the Inspections Division office. The enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act is not a responsibility of this division since it is a federal law. However, individual property owners and their contractors are responsible for complying with the requirements of the ADA in construction projects within the city.

II.B. Permits and Fees

Douglas M. Smits, C.B.O.
(843) 724-7433

Once approvals for construction activity have been received, permits are required to be obtained for the actual work to be performed. Double fees are charged for all areas when work is started without a permit. The following are the types of permits issued by the Inspections Division.

1. Building Permits

Check with the Permits and Fees Division for appropriate fee schedule.

2. Impact Fee Collection

- 1) Residential - \$161.00 per residential dwelling unit
- 2) Non-residential - \$.04 per square foot

Used to help pay for new garbage trucks, fire stations, and fire apparatus. Fee is collected when one obtains a building permit. This applies only to new construction.

3. Electrical Permits

Electrical permits are required whenever electrical construction activity is performed on a property, including but not limited to, new services, rewiring, additional wiring, swimming pool bonding and grounding, upgrading electrical services and temporary power poles for new construction. Electrical permits associated with other construction activity for which a building permit is required may not be obtained prior to a building permit being obtained by the general contractor.

For any electrical construction activity commenced prior to obtaining a permit and for which a stop work order has been issued, the permit fees per the established schedule shall be doubled.

4. Fire Permits

Fire Permits are required and must be obtained for fire suppression and alarm systems, hazardous material storage tank installations or removals, air supported structures, fireworks displays and other fire-related systems. The fee for the Fire Permits is a flat \$40.00. Any activity for which a fire permit is required that is commenced prior to obtaining a permit, and for which a stop work order has been issued, will be subject to the fee being doubled.

5. Gas Permits

Gas Permits are required for any gas construction activity commenced within the property lines of property in the City of Charleston, including but not limited to new construction, repairs, alterations and/or additions to a natural gas system. Gas permits are also required for any property for which the gas meter has been disconnected for greater than one year or for which the gas utility will not reconnect service without an inspection from the City of Charleston.

Any gas construction activity for which a permit is required that is commenced prior to obtaining a permit and for which a stop work order has been issued will be subject to the fee being doubled.

6. Mechanical Permits

Mechanical permits are required to be obtained for any new heating, ventilating, or air conditioning system or cooking exhaust system and for any modifications to existing HVAC or hood systems, including but not limited to ductwork rerouting or additions, system component replacements and/or significant repairs.

7. Plumbing Permits

Plumbing permits are required for any new plumbing system installation within the property lines of a property and for any modifications to plumbing, sewer, or water systems in existing systems.

For work commenced prior to obtaining a permit and for which a stop work order has been issued, the established fees shall be doubled.

II.C. Technical Review Committee

Engineering Division

75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor, Charleston, South Carolina 29401

(843) 724-3782

Thomas F. O'Brien, Jr., Deputy Director-Technical Service

Section 1: Introduction

The purpose of the Technical Review Committee (TRC) is to review proposed developments for compliance with City of Charleston codes. The review committee consists of representatives from various City departments who address a range of issues including building codes, zoning requirements, stormwater drainage regulations and traffic impact. In addition, Charleston Commissioners of Public Works (CPW) and South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) representatives regularly participate in the TRC process.

The Technical Review Committee Procedure Manual has been prepared in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance to assist designers and developers through three different types of project reviews.

1. **TRC Site Plan Review** includes multi-family, commercial and industrial Development in accordance with Article 6 of the Zoning Ordinance.
2. **PUD Site plan Review** includes properties zoned Planned Unit Development (PUD) in accordance with Article 2, Part 7 and Part 8 of the Zoning Ordinance.
3. **Subdivision Conceptual Review** includes developments of single- and two-family dwellings in accordance with Article 6 of the Zoning Ordinance.

The TRC Procedure Manual describes the information that must be provided with each application to allow for adequate staff review. This manual does not include all regulations pertaining to new development. For these regulations, various publications available from the City of Charleston or other agencies should be consulted. These include the following:

1. **City of Charleston Zoning Ordinance**, published by Municipal Code Corporation, Tallahassee, Florida. Call (904) 576-3171 to order, credit cards are

accepted. Order forms are also available from the office of the Department of Design, Development and Preservation.

2. **International Building Code and International Fire Code.** Available from the International Code Council.
3. **City of Charleston Public Improvement Standards and Specifications Design Manual.** Available from the Department of Public Service, Engineering Division.

Section 2: Review Requirements

2.1 Developments Requiring TRC Site Plan Approval

TRC Site Plan approval is required when:

- a) A new building in excess of 500 square feet is to be constructed; or
- b) A building addition of 2,000 or more square feet of space is to be constructed; or
- c) A development will result in changes to traffic circulation and/or on- or off-site stormwater drainage systems; or
- d) The zoning classification of a property to be developed requires TRC approval; or
- e) Restrictive covenants applicable to a property to be developed require site plan review.

Exemptions from TRC Site Plan Approval:

- f) Developments of single-family dwelling(s) and/or two-family dwelling(s), except that developments of single-family and/or two-family dwellings where the total area to ultimately be developed is 10 or more acres, or permits 50 or more dwelling units, shall require TRC Subdivision Conceptual Approval as stated below;
- g) Small storage structures or garages not exceeding 500 square feet; and
- h) Routine repairs and maintenance of existing structures.

2.2 Developments Requiring PUD Site Plan Approval

PUD Site Plan Approval is required for all properties zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development).

2.3 Developments Requiring TRC Subdivision Conceptual Approval

TRC Subdivision Conceptual Approval is required when a development of single-family and/or two-family dwellings includes a total area to ultimately be developed of 10 or more acres, or permits 50 or more dwelling units.

Section 3: Development Classifications for TRC Site Plan Review

To aid in reviewing **TRC Site Plans** and inspecting projects, the following guidelines are used to classify developments. When development falls into more than one development classification, the higher classification shall apply.

3.1 Major Developments contain;

- a. Ten or more acres, or
- b. Fifty or more dwelling units, or
- c. 20,000 or more square feet of non-residential building coverage in existing and/or new building(s).

3.2 Intermediate Developments contain;

- a. Between one acre and nine acres, or
- b. Between eleven and forty-nine dwelling units, or
- c. Between 5,000 square feet and 19,999 square feet of non-residential building coverage in existing and/or new building(s).

3.3 Minor Developments contain;

- a. Less than one acre, or
- b. Between three and ten housing units, or
- c. Less than 5,000 square feet of building coverage.

Please note that these classifications do not correspond to other requirements of the Zoning Ordinance or any other city codes.

II.D. Design Review Committee

Steve Livingston, Matt Compton
(843) 724-7324

The Design Review Committee is appointed by Mayor Riley to review all projects that may cause changes to and/or improvements to the public realm, including the right of way and City property, including buildings, parks and facilities. It is made up of representatives of City Departments which may play a role in development, regulation, design, engineering, permitting, inspections, and planning.

The Design Review Committee meets the first and third Thursday of each month. Agenda items must be submitted one week in advance. Drawings, technical documents and photographs should be included in the submittal to the Department of Parks, Project Management Division, 823 Meeting Street, Charleston, South Carolina 29403. For information call (843) 724-7324 and ask for the Design Review Committee Coordinator.

III. Certificate of Occupancy

Department of Public Service

75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor, Charleston, South Carolina, 29401

(843) 724-7433

Douglas M. Smits, Chief Building Official

A Certificate of Occupancy authorizes the occupancy of a building for a particular use. It is required in any of the following situations:

1. When moving into a building (including single and multi-family development).
2. Plan to occupy a structure that has been constructed, enlarged, extended, reconstructed, structurally altered, moved or converted to another use.
3. Change the occupancy of a building to a different use within a use group.
4. When obtaining a business license to engage in any business or profession within a building or structure in the city.
5. When an existing business has a name change or a change in ownership.

There are two different Certificates of Occupancy (C/O) - Construction C/O and Business C/O. The Construction C/O indicates that construction is complete and meets building standards. The Business C/O approves the business in a particular location. Application forms for a Business C/O are available from the Business License Office.

The Chief Building Official will issue the Certificate of Occupancy when satisfied that the building meets minimum building code requirements for the operation of a specific business and when the Zoning Division certifies that zoning requirements have been met.

IV. Revenue Collections/Business License Division

Department of Budget, Finance and Revenue Collections

Stephen A. Bedard, Chief Financial Officer

116 Meeting Street, Charleston, South Carolina, 29401

(843) 579-7529

Alan Horres, Director, Revenue Collections

75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor, Charleston, South Carolina, 29401

(843) 724-3711

The Revenue Collections/Business License Division is responsible for the collection, control, and deposit of city revenues in appropriate city accounts. The division is responsible for enforcement of the City's Business License Ordinance and other ordinances related to the collection of city revenue. The collections role includes administration of the city's parking violation/ticket collections system to include collection, processing, and depositing of parking ticket fines.

Once a Business Certificate of Occupancy is received, it may be taken to the City of Charleston Revenue Collections Division to apply for a business license. Upon issuance of a business license, the business may open. Restaurants or establishments serving food and/or beverages must present a DHEC certificate of inspection before a business license can be purchased.

Businesses located outside of the City of Charleston limits are subject to a business license if they engage in business within the City of Charleston unless otherwise exempt by law. Home-based businesses are also subject to business license fees.

V. Signage

Department of Design, Development and Preservation

75 Calhoun Street, Charleston, South Carolina 29401

(843) 724-3765

Yvonne Fortenberry, Director

If an owner of a business wishes to install a sign of any type (i.e. window, freestanding, banner or facade sign), a sign permit application must be completed and approved by the Department of Design, Development and Preservation before a permit is issued for installation. Applicants should consult with the Zoning Division or Urban Design and Preservation Division staff concerning the application and regulations for signage. Only certain types of signage are allowed and the size and number are regulated. There will be fees charged by the Zoning Division and the Building Inspections Division. If the request is for signage in the historic district or commercial corridor, approval is required from the Board of Architectural Review or the Commercial Corridor Design Review Board.

VI. General Information

VI.A. Department of Public Service

75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor, Charleston, South Carolina, 29401

(843) 724-3754

Laura S. Cabiness, P.E., Director/City Engineer

1. Environmental Services Division

2150 Milford Street, Charleston, SC 29405

(843) 724-7365

Sam Price, Superintendent

The Environmental Services Division is responsible for collection of trash and garbage in the city in accordance with the Code of the City of Charleston collection and disposal ordinance. This division also maintains a fleet of street sweeping equipment which cleans city streets daily. Blockpeople are located in various areas around the city to empty trash receptacles, pick up litter and maintain designated areas.

Garbage Collection

There are two types of garbage collection: Residential garbage is collected once a week with the semi-automated collection using a 96-gallon container. Commercial, including restaurant garbage, is collected seven days a week (maximum of five 40-gallon containers with tight-fitting lids).

Trash Collection

Dry trash and yard trimmings are collected for all city residents in compliance with the State of South Carolina Solid Waste Policy and Management Act. In order to comply with the Act and satisfy requirements of the Charleston County Landfill, all leaves and grass clippings must be bagged in clear plastic bags and limbs and brush should not be bagged or mixed with other types of trash.

For Garbage or Trash related questions, please call (843) 724-7364 Monday through Friday during the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or the Office of the Ombudsman at (843) 724-3745 during the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

2. Streets and Sidewalks Division

2150 Milford Street, Charleston, SC 29405

(843) 724-7366

Michael R. Metzler, Deputy Director – Operations

Michael Chisolm, Assistant Superintendent

This division is responsible for maintenance of streets and sidewalks within the limits of the city and responds to issues of safety or tripping hazards on concrete sidewalks or bluestone or cobblestone sidewalks or streets. Pothole Hotline (843) 768-4653.

3. Engineering Division

75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor, Charleston, South Carolina 29401
(843) 724-3761
Thomas S. O'Brien, Jr., Deputy Director – Technical Services

The Engineering Division is responsible for review and enforcement of the Code of the City of Charleston as it relates to Stormwater Service and Streets and Drainage issues. It reviews all construction and issues permits for construction which occurs within the dedicated public right-of-way, reviews construction which may affect drainage and roadway construction, enforces state and federal laws regulating stormwater facilities and erosion control and maintains design and construction standards. It provides review of all applications for subdivision of existing properties to insure that infrastructure and right-of-ways are either in existence or constructed to city standards. The division also administers the city's Stormwater Service and manages the Capital Improvement Program for stormwater drainage system and right-of-way improvements.

4. Stormwater Maintenance Division

2150 Milford Street Charleston, South Carolina 29407
(843) 724-7367
Michael R. Metzler, Deputy Director – Operations

This Division is responsible for maintaining all of the existing city drainage systems and constructing minor drainage improvements for performing routine maintenance of drainage ditches throughout the city. It also constructs new drainage systems, repairs existing drainage system failures such as cave-ins and provides erosion repair within city right-of-ways and dedicated easements.

VI.B. Department of Economic Development

75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor, Charleston, South Carolina 29401
(843) 724-3796
Sharon A. Brennan, Director

The Department of Economic Development serves as a catalyst and facilitator of public and private initiatives that foster a healthy business climate for the City of Charleston, thereby providing jobs and economic opportunities for its citizens. The Department fulfills its purpose by working with the private sector to facilitate the completion of projects; manages and supports economic development initiatives; promotes projects which revitalize areas of the city; provides programs to encourage start up and expansion of business; manages Building "C" of the City Market; and assists disadvantaged, minority, and female-owned businesses.

1. Business Recruitment and Redevelopment

(843) 724-7472

Chauncey Clark, Business Recruitment & Redevelopment Manager

The Economic Development Department is responsible for recruiting businesses – retail and office and coordinating the activities of retail and office real estate development. Negotiations with representatives of real estate, private enterprises, and community leaders are facilitated in efforts to acquire, lease and/or develop land. The activities of the office include providing staff support, planning and implementation of redevelopment activities in existing commercial area.

2. Charleston Citywide Local Development Corporation

(843) 724-3796

Patrick King, Loan Services Director

Dwayne Jubar, Business Financial Services Director

The Local Development Corporation (LDC), as a certified CDFI, manages several programs, which foster economic development. Loan programs include the SBA Microloan Program, Facade Loan Program, Small Business Incentive Loan Program, LDC RLF Program, Rural Development RLF, and the SBA 504 Loan Program. These programs are available to for-profit businesses located within the boundaries as outlined by each program or to owners of properties in program target areas. The programs require collateral and personal guarantees for the loans. The LDC also offers a technical assistance program for businesses located in the City of Charleston.

Individuals wishing to apply for financial assistance must meet with LDC staff and obtain the appropriate application package.

3. City Market Division

(843) 973-7236

Kenneth A. Greene, Market Manager

The City of Charleston manages Building C of the City Market. This historic market dates back to 1788 when Charles Cotsworth Pinckney ceded the land for the purpose of a city market. Since the 1970s, these original sheds have become an intriguing combination of many small and unique shops, each with its own flavor, history and character. Vendors are able to sell their goods at City provided spaces. Daytime vendors are open from 9:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. daily and evening vendors are open from 7:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

4. Economic Development

(843) 720-3886

Susan Griffin, Project Manager

Staff serves as the liaison for merchants and property owners throughout the city to address issues of concern, to coordinate projects and to promote special events. Staff support is provided for the Central Business District Revitalization Commission and its subcommittees. The Commission was established by ordinance in 1976 and oversees the city revitalization effort on the peninsula south of the Crosstown between the Ashley and Cooper Rivers.

5. Minority Business Development Office

(843) 973-7247

Barrett Tolbert, Minority Business Development Officer

The purpose of the office is to market and promote programs to help with the development and creation of minority/women-owned businesses and Minority Business Enterprise/Women Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE) employment opportunities. The office prepares and disseminates information about MBE/WBE Programs, formulates and updates regulations regarding program participation, responds to citizen inquiries and complaints, prepares and maintains a current list of Minority Business Development (MBD) vendors for referral and distribution and prepares reports for the Mayor, City Council, and other City departments. The MBD office serves as a liaison between businesses and the Renewal Community. Additionally, the MBD office provides technical assistance and is an outreach to the business community which serves to develop entrepreneurial and employment opportunities.

MBE/WBE firms wishing to obtain state certification should contact this office for assistance.

6. Grants

965-4055

Sonnie Robinson – Grants Compliance Officer

Through its Community Assistance and Accommodations Tax grant programs, the City awards funds each year to non-profit organizations that serve community needs, as well as to tax-exempt agencies that enhance area tourism.

The City offers two types of grant award programs annually to qualifying organizations:

- Community Assistance Grants
- Accommodations Tax Grants

More information can be obtain by going to the City web site
www.charlestoncity.info Look under Departments – Economic Development - Grants.

VI.C. Department of Planning and Neighborhoods

75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor, Charleston, South Carolina 29401

(843) 724-3787

Christopher Morgan, Interim Director

The Department of Planning and Neighborhoods is designed to promote a strong community and vital public realm; preserve and enhance Charleston’s diverse neighborhoods; foster quality new neighborhoods and generally healthy urban environment; involve all citizens in planning for their city’s future; and help city government design its program and operation to be consistent with the community’s vision.

1. Planning

The Department of Planning and Neighborhoods handles the City’s comprehensive planning needs, including writing and updating the City’s state required comprehensive plan, writing and implementing various neighborhood and area plans, and conducting special planning studies as needed. This Department along with Design, Development and Preservation provides staff support to the City Planning Commission.

2. Neighborhood Services

(843) 724-3731

Jane Baker, Coordinator

The Department of Neighborhood Services acts to improve communication, understanding, and cooperation between Charleston citizens and City officials by providing for an official process to recognize neighborhood associations as the citizens’ voice from the neighborhood. The Neighborhood Commission, a body of citizens appointed by the City Council members and coordinated by city staff members, grants Neighborhood Council status to neighborhood associations which meet specific guidelines. The Neighborhood Service Coordinator, a city staff member, works with the Neighborhood Councils to provide the following services:

- Arranging meetings with leaders of the community and existing civic associations or organization to inform them of the Citizen Participation Plan.
- Providing samples of guidelines, requirements, by-laws, and information on how to set up a Neighborhood Council.
- Maintaining contact with Neighborhood Councils and maintaining up-to-date information of neighborhood presidents.
- Assisting in the preparation of newsletters and notices for neighborhood meetings.
- Initiating the planning and implementation of self-help development actions including Operation Neighborhood.

- Ensuring that concerns expressed by neighborhood representatives reach the appropriate city official.

3. Ombudsman Service

(843) 724-3745

Brian Sheehan, Ombudsman

The primary function of the Ombudsman is to respond to concerns or complaints about City services or request for services. Additionally, the office acts as an information and referral service to other government and non-profit agencies.

4. GIS Services (Geographic Information System)

724-3769

Tracy McKee

GIS involves the use of computers to link spatial data (like a map) directly with information about specific features on the map. This combination of information allows both rapid analysis of data and mapping the results.

5. Annexation

(843) 724-3788

Philip Overcash, Planner

The Annexation Division acts as a conduit between Charleston and Berkeley County property owners interested in locating within the limits of the City of Charleston. The City of Charleston's annexation program is focused on four distinct geographical areas – James Island, West Ashley and Johns Island in Charleston County and the Cainhoy Peninsula in Berkeley County.

Municipal annexation is purely a state political and legislative matter, governed by Chapter 3 of Title 5 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976. Currently, the only means of annexation in the State of South Carolina is the Petition and Ordinance method. This method allows for an area contiguous to a municipality to be annexed by filing a petition signed by 75% of the freeholders owning at least 75% of the assessed valuation of real property in the area. The annexation is complete once City Council enacts an ordinance declaring the area annexed into the municipality.

VI.D. Department of Traffic and Transportation

180 Lockwood Drive Extension, Charleston, South Carolina 29403

(843) 724-7368

Hernan E. Pena, Jr., Director

The Department of Traffic and Transportation was established and functions in accordance with the City Code Section 19-36 through 41. In order to maintain the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout the city, the department studies,

plans, and implements traffic operations and transportation services/facilities throughout the city.

The department is responsible for the planning, geometric configuration, and transportation operations of roads, streets, and highways in the City of Charleston. The Department monitors transportation networks, terminals, abutting lands and relationships with other modes of transportation for the achievement of safe, efficient, and convenient movement of persons and goods within the city.

The department has responsibility for developing the means of increasing the efficiency of all modes of transportation with the city and for devising improvements for the broad policy requirements. The various operations are administered as follows:

1. Parking Division

(843) 724-7371

William D. Stephens, Parking Administrator

This division manages the commercial and passenger loading zone areas throughout the Peninsula. Businesses that wish to identify the closest available commercial or passenger-loading zones should contact Mr. William D. Stephens, Parking Administrator, for assistance.

The Parking Division manages and advises various contractors in the Downtown Area who wish to locate or arrange off-street, long-term (all day or for multiple days) employee parking for the conducting of business, particularly in residential areas of the Peninsula.

2. Traffic Safety Inspection Division

(843) 724-7373

Robert Somerville, Traffic Operations Engineer

This division oversees and permits the use of the public right-of-way and street closures within the corporate city limits by utility companies, construction contractors, moving vans, private citizens, and other divisions of local government.

The division oversees all aspects of traffic safety inspection for all areas of downtown streets, including the permitting and placement of dumpsters for the collection of refuse or debris, and PODs for furniture storage.

This division supervises manual traffic volume surveys, speed studies, accident and time delay studies, and placement of automatic traffic counting equipment, including speed-reading equipment.

This division permits the rental and specific location usage of parking meter bags within the Downtown area.

CONSTRUCTION PARKING PERMIT

The purpose of Construction Parking Permits is to allow contractors to park at or in close proximity of the job site in which he/she is working. The permit allows the contractor to park at this location without the worries of receiving parking citations.

To obtain a Construction Parking Permit, the contractor should go to the Department of Traffic & Transportation at 180 Lockwood Drive Ext. or call 724-7368 to make arrangements. The contractor will have to provide copies of his/her Business License and the building permit for the address, and the vehicle license tag number in order to obtain a permit. Only one permit may be issued per job site.

The Construction Parking Permit is for vehicle use only. This permit does not allow a storage area for the job site. This includes the following: debris on the street, building supplies, portable toilets, ladders, unattached trailers, unauthorized equipment, etc.

If at any time the contractor has to interrupt traffic flow, he/she needs to contact the Department of Traffic & Transportation to fill out a Street Blocking Permit.

Residential Neighborhoods

If a job site is in a Residential Neighborhood, one parking permit may be issued for the vehicle that brings in the tools or supplies only. The permit will be valid only for the vehicle whose license number appears on the permit. All other contractor vehicles will have to abide by the Residential Signs for that District. In most areas, parking is restricted to one or two hours for a day. Contractors are encouraged to car pool to the job site or make arrangements for off street parking.

Business District

If contractors wish to rent metered parking spaces to park near job sites, they must go to the Department of Traffic & Transportation to apply for a permit. There is a fee of \$10.00 a day per metered space and a \$20.00 deposit for each bag. The bag must be returned in good condition with the lock and key attached on the date and time indicated on the permit in order to receive a refund. If a refund is granted, it will be mailed to the address indicated on the permit. For parking meter problems, call (843) 724-7375.

Dumpster Permit

The Department of Traffic and Transportation is the issuing authority for all dumpster permits. Any person or entity who wishes to place a dumpster on a public right of way must first obtain a dumpster permit and pay a fee of \$10 per day. Dumpster permits are also issued for PODS placed on a public right of way. If the dumpster or POD is placed in a metered parking space, the fee shall include the additional cost of

a daily meter bag fee for each parking space used. Requirements, standards and penalties may be found in City Code Article XVII Dumpsters.

Those applying for a dumpster permit need to go to the Department of Traffic and Transportation at 180 Lockwood Drive Ext.

Street Blocking Permits

Street blocking permits are required for any work or event that causes changes to traffic flow on the street, parking lane or public right of way. There is no fee associated with this permit unless there is obstruction to a metered parking space which would result in the cost of the daily meter bag fee for each parking space used. You may call 724-7368 for further information.

The Department of Traffic and Transportation has the right to revoke any permit if the contractor is found in non-compliance with the permit.

3. Electronics/Traffic Signals Division

(843) 724-7379

Troy Mitchell, Electronics/Traffic Signals Superintendent

This division does not specifically interface with citizens or contractors outside the specific scope of its duties except to respond to emergency call-outs regarding traffic signal equipment failures.

4. Engineering Design Division

(843) 724-7372

GIS and Engineering Design is responsible for preparing signalization, pavement marking, and parking plans as well as maintaining the department's portion of the City's GIS database and Website. GIS and Engineering design is also responsible for creating presentation maps and various types of graphic illustrations.

This division does not specifically interface with citizens or contractors.

5. Signs and Markings Division

(843) 724-7368

Robert Somerville, Traffic Operations Engineer

This division oversees the fabrication, installation, and maintenance of the city's standard street name sign program and also approves the fabrication of new and replacement specialty street name signs. Specialty street name signs are replaced by the city, as needed, with standard green with white lettering signage for no additional fee to the neighborhood. The replacement of specialty street name signage is a fee-based operation performed by the city at a fair market value or by an outside vendor

with City approval. All costs incurred for the replacement of specialty signage are to be paid by the requesting neighborhood.

This division interacts with the public regarding complaints or requested changes and new installations of traffic control devices, including signage and pavement markings managed by and under the jurisdiction of the City.

VI.E . Charleston Digital Corridor

392-A Meeting Street, Charleston, South Carolina 29403

(843) 724-3773

(843)607-1264 cell

ernest@charlestondigitalcorridor.com

Ernest G. Andrade, Director

The Charleston Digital Corridor is a creative effort by the City of Charleston to attract, nurture, and promote knowledge-based enterprise in targeted areas of the city. With the goal of offering tangible resources to the business community, the Corridor serves as a portal to government, infrastructure, real estate, education and professional resources.

VII. Important Phone Numbers

City Contacts:

Design, Development & Preservation		724-3765
	Urban Design & Preservation	724-3781
	BAR & CCDR	724-3781
	Planning Commission	724-3781
	Sign & Tree Ordinance	724-3781
	Zoning	724-3781
	Civic Design Center	958-6416
Permits/Building Inspections		724-7433
	Construction	724-7320
	Electrical	724-7433
	Gas	724-7433
	Mechanical	724-7320
	Plumbing	724-7433
Planning and Neighborhoods		724-3787
	Planning	724-3787
	Neighborhood Services	724-3731
	Ombudsman Service	724-3745
	GIS Services	724-3787
	Annexation	724-3788
Executive	Digital Corridor	724-3773
Economic Development		724-3796
	Charleston Citywide Local Development Corporation	965-4089
	Minority Business Development	973-7247
	City Market	973-7236
	Business Recruitment and Redevelopment	724-7472
	Project Manager	720-3886
	Grants	965-4055
Traffic and Transportation		724-7368
	Parking Division Meters	973-7288
	Traffic Safety Inspection Division	724-7373
	Electronics/Traffic Signals Division	724-7379
	Engineering Design Division	724-7372
	Signs and Markings Division	958-6488
Revenue Collections/Business License		724-3711
Public Service		724-3754
	Environmental Services Division	724-7365

	Streets and Sidewalks Division	724-7366
	Engineering Division	724-3761
	Maintenance Division	724-7367
Police Department	Non-emergency	577-7434
Mayor's Office, City Hall	Joseph P. Riley, Jr.	577-6970
Ombudsman/Citizens Services		724-3745
Clerk of Council, City Hall		724-3727
Emergency Services		911
Clean City Commission		724-7321
Parks Department	Design Review	724-7324

Utility Contacts:

BellSouth Telephone		
	Small Business	780-2800
	BellSouth Business Solutions	1/800-945-6500
Commissioners of Public Works	Water and Sewer	727-6800
SC Electric and Gas	Gas and Electricity	554-7234

Professional Contacts:

Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce		577-2510
Convention and Visitors Bureau		853-8000
Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)		727-4778
Tate Center for Entrepreneurship (College of Charleston)		953-6596
Charleston County Recycling		720-7111
Regional Development Alliance		529-0333
Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments (COG)		529-0400
Charleston Area Transportation Authority (CARTA)		724-7420
SC Manufacturing Extension Partnership		800-MEP-4MFG
Small Business Ombudsman		803-737-0440
SC Export Consortium		803-777-8870
SC Women's Business Center		803-461-8900
Small Business Administration		803-765-5377
Small Business Development Center		740-6160

VIII. Important Meeting Times

Ways and Means – 4:30 p.m.

City Council – 5:00 p.m.

Meeting: 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month
Meets only once a month in the summer
Meets at Reuben M. Greenberg Municipal Building while City Hall is under renovation (except five meetings per year at various locations)

Board of Zoning Appeals - Zoning:

Application Deadline: 3:00 pm Monday, four weeks prior to meeting
Meeting: 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month, 5:15 p.m.
Public Notice: Monday, two weeks prior to meeting
Meets at 75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor Conference Room A/B

Board of Zoning Appeals - Site Design:

Application Deadline: 3:00 p.m. Monday, four weeks prior to meeting
Meeting: 1st Wednesday of each month
Public Notice: Monday, two weeks prior to meeting
Meets at 75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor Conference Room A/B

Design Review Committee

Agenda items submitted by: One week in advance
Meeting: 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month, 9:30 a.m.
Meets at 75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor Conference Room A/B

Board of Architectural Review:

Demolition Deadline: 12:00 noon Monday, one week prior to meeting
Application Deadline: 12:00 noon Wednesday
Meeting: 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month, 4:30 p.m.
Public Notice: Thursday, prior to meeting
Meets at 75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor Conference Room A/B

Planning Commission:

Application Deadline: 3:00 pm Thursday, four weeks prior to meeting
Meeting: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 5:00 p.m.
Public Notice: Thursday, two weeks prior to meeting
Meets at 75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor Conference Room A/B

Technical Review Committee (TRC)

Call 724-3782 for application

Application Deadline: 12:00 noon Tuesday the week prior to the meeting at which project will be heard.
Applications should be turned in to the Engineering Office, 75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor.
Meeting: First, third and fourth Thursday of each month
Meets at 75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor Conference Room A/B

Commercial Corridor Design Review Board

Application Deadline: 12:00 noon Thursday, one week prior to meeting
Meeting: 2nd & 4th Thursday of each month
Public Notice: Thursday, one week prior to meeting
Meets at 75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor Conference Room A/B

Central Business District Revitalization Commission

Meeting: 2nd Thursday of each month, 8:30 a.m.
Meets at 75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor Conference Room A/B

Charleston Citywide Local Development Corporation

Application Deadline: 5th of the month, the month prior to the meeting
Meeting: 1st Wednesday of each month, 8:30 a.m.
Meets at 75 Calhoun Street, Third Floor Conference Room A/B

Special Events Planning Committee

Meeting: Every other Wednesday, 1:00 p.m.
Meets at Recreation Department, Mary Murray Boulevard

Please note that the above dates are a guideline and are subject to change.

Copies of City ordinances can be obtained from the Office of the Clerk of Council, City Hall.

Zoning Ordinance may be viewed at the City website at www.municode.com.

IX. Important Suggestions from the Central Business District Revitalization Commission

Loading Zones:

- The City developed and maintains a system of commercial loading zones.
- Commercial loading zones are to be used for making and receiving deliveries **only**.
- The City ordinance limits loading zone use to 30 minutes **only** while **actively** loading/loading.
- Violation of commercial loading zone use may result in a fine of \$45 per offense.
- **Use of traffic lanes for unloading/loading is illegal.**
- Blocking a moving lane of traffic may result in a fine of \$45 per offense.
- If you have questions or special requests regarding loading zones or deliveries, contact William D. Stephens (843) 724-7371 at the Department of Transportation.
- When moving into a new business location, please note the proximity to nearby loading zones.

Trash and Garbage Collection:

- The Central Business District Revitalization Commission recommends:
 - The use of refrigerated trash storage space for restaurants.
 - Solid waste recycling.
 - Cooperation between businesses to achieve refrigerated storage and recycling.
 - Recycling of grease (required by law).
 - Prompt removal of garbage cans from the public right-of-way after pick up (required by law).
 - Periodic power washing of sidewalks to eliminate grease and other trash associated residue.
 - Compaction of food waste with liquid waste disposal in the sanitary sewage system.
 - For recycling information call Charleston County Recycling at 720-7111.