

CITIZENS' GUIDE TO COMMUNITY PLANNING

Greater
Myrtle
Beach
Region



S.C. SEA GRANT
EXTENSION
PROGRAM



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The S.C. Sea Grant Extension Program (SCSGEP) is a joint outreach program of the Clemson University Extension Service and the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium. The SCSGEP applies science-based information to educate individuals, businesses, local and state government, and other organizations on the wise use and conservation of coastal and ocean resources. The S.C. Sea Grant Extension Coastal Communities Initiative is a collaborative land-use planning and water quality program for local decision makers to help foster sustainable land-use planning and resource management and engage local governments in the development and implementation of sustainable land management policies and practices. Funds from this program initiative were used to support the printing of this document. The program seeks to educate citizens and public officials about land use and associated impacts on natural resources by providing science-based information and tools to enhance their ability to address the pressures of coastal growth.



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All photos courtesy of Horry County.

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INTRODUCTION

- 4 Cities and counties “plan” in order to identify important community issues (e.g. new growth, housing needs, and environmental protection), project future demand for services (e.g. sewer, water, roads), anticipate potential problems (e.g. overloaded sewer facilities or crowded roads), and establish goals and policies for directing and managing growth. Local governments use a variety of tools discussed in this document to address such issues within the organized framework of local planning procedures established by the State of South Carolina.

Each community is entirely unique when it comes to the planning tools that are available to address the aforementioned issues. Such processes are under constant revision amongst the eight governing bodies that implement land-use policies within the county. In many cases determining what standard applies in one area of the county over another becomes a daunting task, as property owners and citizens orient themselves to the planning framework. Though this guide does not cover all aspects of the planning process and may not cover all techniques available, it serves as a basic primer for the land-use planning techniques deployed in various jurisdictions within Horry County.



THE STATE: SOUTH CAROLINA

- 6 The Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 makes it possible for communities across the state to establish a governing framework through which land-use decisions may be made. In addition to establishing uniform standards for the development of land-use regulations, the act provides rules of procedure, powers, and duties associated with the implementation of such regulations.

Comprehensive Land-Use Plans

The comprehensive plan is the basic foundation for local planning. It lays out a community's vision and priorities and describes where, how, and in some cases when development will occur. The document serves as a policy guide to decisions about community development.

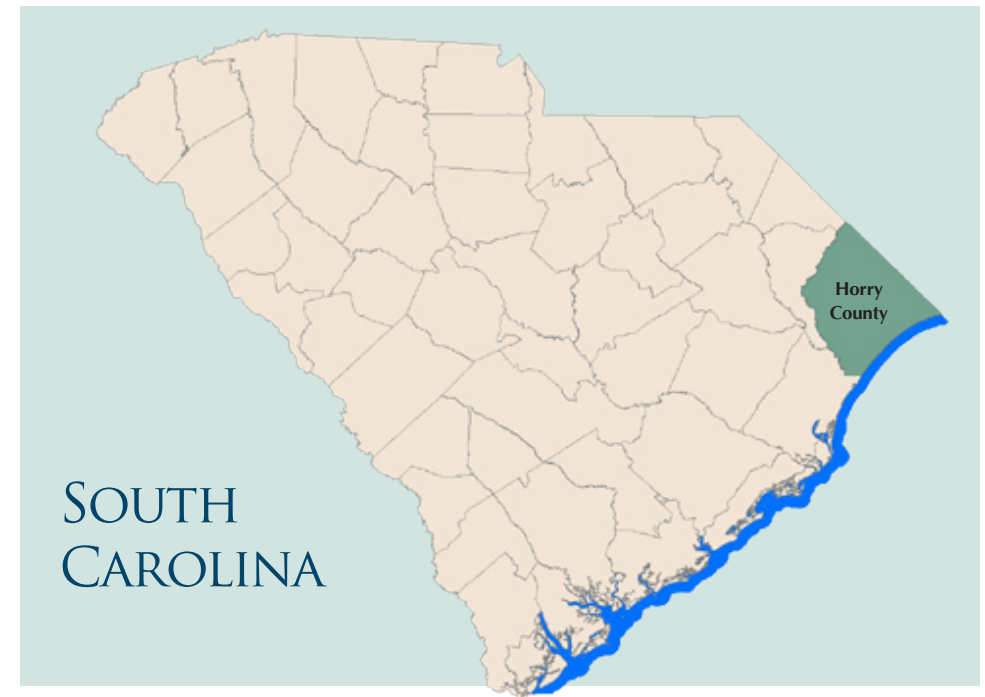
The comprehensive plan consists of maps and written policy statements, including goals and objectives, addressing issues related to growth, housing, economic development, transportation, environment, parks and open space conservation, aesthetics, community character, and neighborhood and historic preservation. The plan then outlines implementation strategies for achieving the identified goals and objectives.

The primary emphasis of the plan is to provide long-range guidance to property owners, citizens and public officials when decisions are made on land-use issues. In accordance with the Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994, communities who wish to utilize zoning regulations must "...maintain a planning process which will result in the systematic preparation and continual evaluation of the elements of the comprehensive plan." S.C. Code § 6-29-510 (A).

The planning commission must re-evaluate the comprehensive plan elements at least every five years and all elements of the plan must be updated at least every ten years. The planning commission must prepare and recommend a new plan and the governing body must adopt a new comprehensive plan every ten years. Changes in growth and the direction of development may dictate review as necessary, to ensure consistency between planning tool revision and the comprehensive plan. S.C. Code § 6-29-510 (A).

Zoning

Zoning regulations are adopted for the general purpose of guiding development in accordance with the existing and future needs of the community in consideration of the public health, safety, and general welfare. Zoning ordinances consist



of two parts: the text and the map. The text establishes the zoning districts and standards thereof generally limited to: use, size, density, dimensions, parking, and other developmental aspects of a particular property. The associated map establishes the boundaries within which a particular standard may be enforced. The zoning ordinance is the primary tool in the implementation of comprehensive plan goals for growth and development, and regulatory revisions may be required in concert with comprehensive plan revisions. This would be done to ensure what is being envisioned in the comprehensive plan is reflected in the local planning regulations and codes.

Land Development Regulations

Land development regulations govern the conversion of raw land into subdivided lots for construction of buildings and other structures. Often referred to as subdivision regulations, these mechanisms are utilized to control the site design, improvement standards, level of service requirement, and other aspects related to the actual development of a particular property.

Resources

Waccamaw Council of Governments (COG)
Mark Hoeweler, Executive Planning Director
(843) 436-6130

www.wrcog.org/landuse.htm

THE COUNTY: HORRY

8 Comprehensive Plan: Envision 2025

Horry County's recently revised Comprehensive Plan replaces the former plan adopted in 1999 in accordance with South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994. This plan is a reflection of the County's desire to build on the concepts established by the former plan, while maintaining a sustainable economy, protecting natural and cultural resources, and providing for the efficient delivery of public services in a fiscally responsible manner. The updated Comprehensive Plan provides a vision and direction for future land-use decisions in Horry County.

Zoning

Originally adopted in 1987, the Horry County Zoning Ordinance affects all properties within the unincorporated boundaries of Horry County. Currently, all properties fall within one or more of the County's 61 districts and are subject to all standards associated with such districts, in addition to supplemental standards. Standards affecting all districts include: landscape, buffer, and tree regulations; signage standards; parking regulations; and any applicable overlay standards. Adjustments to the zoning ordinance are often made in response to emerging issues and are advertised and reviewed in accordance with the procedures set forth in state law.

Land Development Regulations

Since 2002, Horry County has enforced land development regulations that govern procedural and technical requirements for the development of property or recordation of documents at the Registrar of Deeds. In general the regulations govern platting procedures, design, and review requirements associated with the new subdivision of property. All properties undergoing any form of legal boundary or dimension adjustment are subject to at least some section of the land development regulations.

Special Purpose Districts

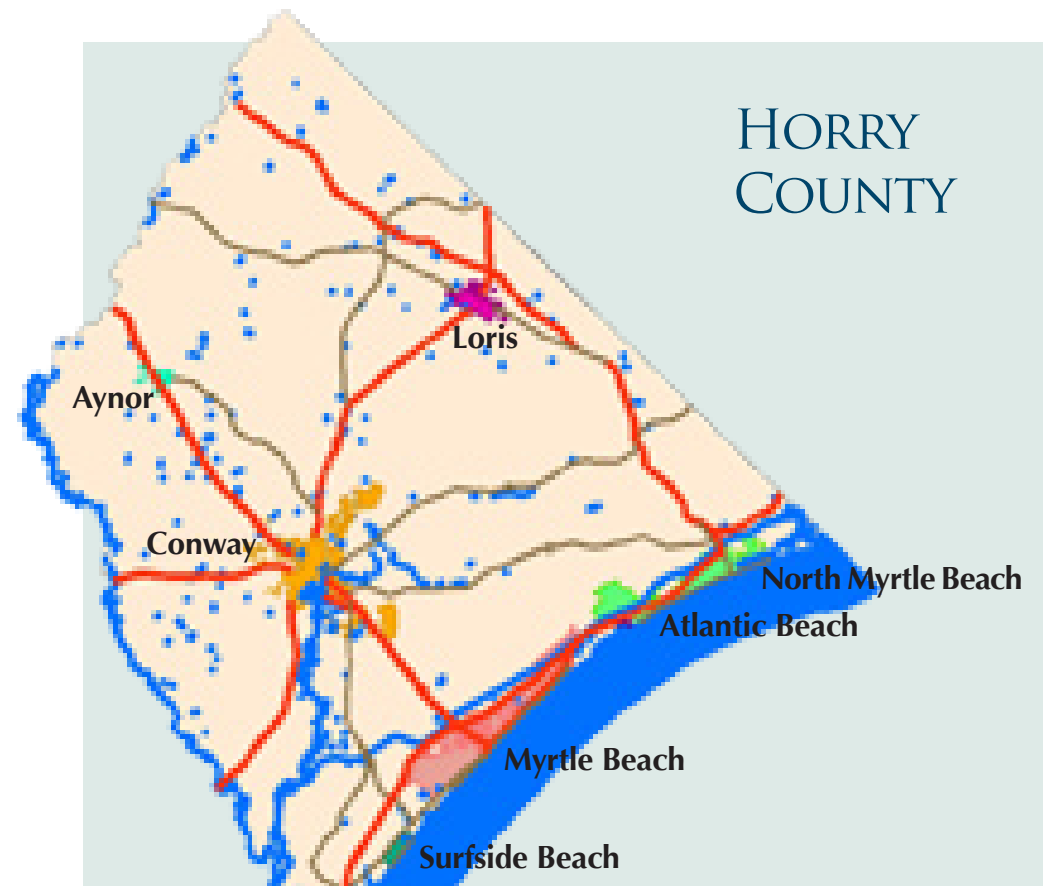
Horry County maintains numerous special purpose districts often called overlay districts. In such areas additional or special standards apply on top of zoning regulations that affect all property. In some circumstance numerous regulatory layers can apply to a single piece of property, each with individual compliance requirements. The most common overlay districts in the County include: US 501 Overlay, US 17 Overlay, SC 544 Overlay, SC 707 Overlay, Holmestown Road Overlay, and Veterans Highway (SC 31) Overlay. Specific requirements and boundaries for each of these districts are listed in the Zoning Ordinance.

In addition Area Plans may be enforced in specific high growth areas of the County. If you determine that your property may be subject to special requirements, you should contact the Planning Department with your property information prior to initiating improvement of your property.

Resources

Horry County Planning and Zoning Department
(843) 915-5340

www.horrycounty.org



THE MUNICIPALITIES

10 **North Myrtle Beach**

The Planning Division is responsible for staff assistance to the North Myrtle Beach Planning Commission in its development of the comprehensive plan, annexations, and enforcement of subdivision regulation. The Zoning Division approves building permits and also inspects new construction for compliance with the City's zoning regulations. In addition to administering zoning regulations, the Zoning Division prepares amendments and new zoning regulations.

Comprehensive Plan

The 1995 Comprehensive Plan is a guideline for future development of the City. In accordance with state law, the plan addresses population, land use, housing, economics, natural resources, cultural resources, and community facilities. In addition the plan addresses local goals and objectives related to transportation facilities and future growth areas and the development thereof.

Zoning

The City of North Myrtle Beach adopted its first zoning ordinance and map in May 1971. As with other regional locations, the City's zoning ordinance has been amended numerous times in order to keep pace with rapid growth and associated issues. In addition, regulatory advancements and new technologies have been employed to ensure that the city has one of the most up-to-date planning and development frameworks in the area. Anyone considering development may meet with the City's professional staff to discuss a project prior to initiating an action.

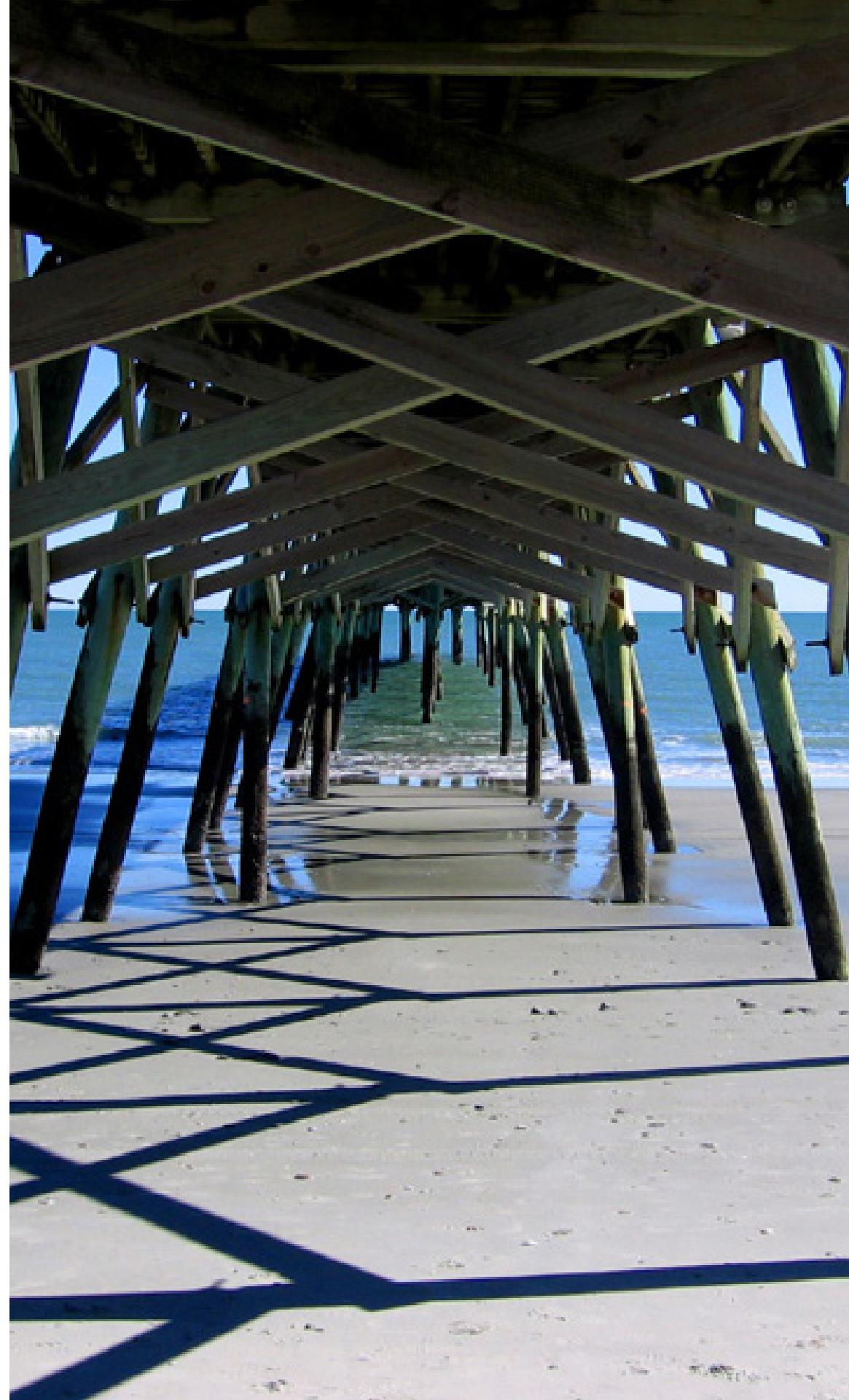
Subdivision Ordinance

Similar to land development regulations, the City maintains a Subdivision Ordinance which governs the legal alteration of property. Planning Commission reviews all such alterations to ensure consistency with other associated land-use regulations. As previously mentioned, the submission and review standards reflect the unique nature of development within the City of North Myrtle Beach and therefore may differ significantly from those in nearby jurisdictions. A complete review of the code or contact with staff should be entertained prior to any substantial land-use action.

Resources

City of North Myrtle Beach
Planning and Development Department
(843) 280-5566

www.nmb.us



12 **Atlantic Beach**

With the assistance of consulting planners, municipal staff are responsible for the administration of the zoning ordinance and the comprehensive land-use plan and community master plan initiatives. Applications regarding annexation, rezoning, subdivision, or commercial development within the Town's jurisdiction are directed by town staff to the appropriate review source.

Comprehensive Plan

The Town's comprehensive plan was last amended in 2001 in order to guide the land-use goals for the community. The plan addresses seven elements including population, housing, economics, natural resources, cultural resources, community facilities, and land use. Comprehensive plan revisions are underway and the updated plan is scheduled to be completed in 2008. In addition to the Town's comprehensive plan, a master plan was developed with the help of consulting planners and adopted in 2007.

Zoning

The Town adopted a comprehensive zoning ordinance in 2001, which has been combined into an all-encompassing Land Management Ordinance (LMO) that also addresses the community's subdivision regulations, development regulations, stormwater management, tree protection and landscaping ordinance, natural resources protection ordinance, and beachfront protection.

Land Development Regulations

Land development regulations governing the platted improvement and/or alteration of property within the Town's jurisdiction are included in the Land Management Ordinance adopted by the Town.

Resources

Town of Atlantic Beach
(843) 663-2284



14 **Myrtle Beach**

The Planning Department formulates recommended goals, plans, policies, and ordinances that provide orderly growth and development for Myrtle Beach. Planning staff serve as support staff for the Planning Commission. Upon application, planners are available to assist citizens with requests to annex, subdivide, rezone, or develop properties within the city limits. Pre-application meetings may be scheduled with professional staff to discuss submission and review processes involved with such actions. A separate but related department known as the Construction Services Department is responsible for enforcement of zoning standards and acts as liaison for the Board of Zoning Appeals and Community Appearance Board.

Comprehensive Plan

Myrtle Beach's Comprehensive Plan serves as a guidebook for the City's development, improvement, and growth during a 20-year period. Originally adopted in 1999 and amended in later years, it provides detail about the City's goals and objectives, both short-term and long-term. The plan includes information on all elements required by state law and offers additional elements and sub-elements on tourism, neighborhoods, and arts. The plan is revised on a regular basis as stipulated by state law.

Zoning

Myrtle Beach adopted its first zoning standards as early as 1947. The City's zoning standards have undergone numerous revisions in response to growth and development within its jurisdiction, and all properties, commercial and residential, are

subject to the standards contained therein. Currently, the City maintains 39 zoning districts. Provisions for the subdivision and development of property are contained within the zoning text as opposed to separate land development regulations. As the subject geography and development dynamic of each jurisdiction in the region is different, it is important to note that the property alteration and review standards are also very different. A complete review of applicable standards should be conducted prior to action on any property within the City. 15

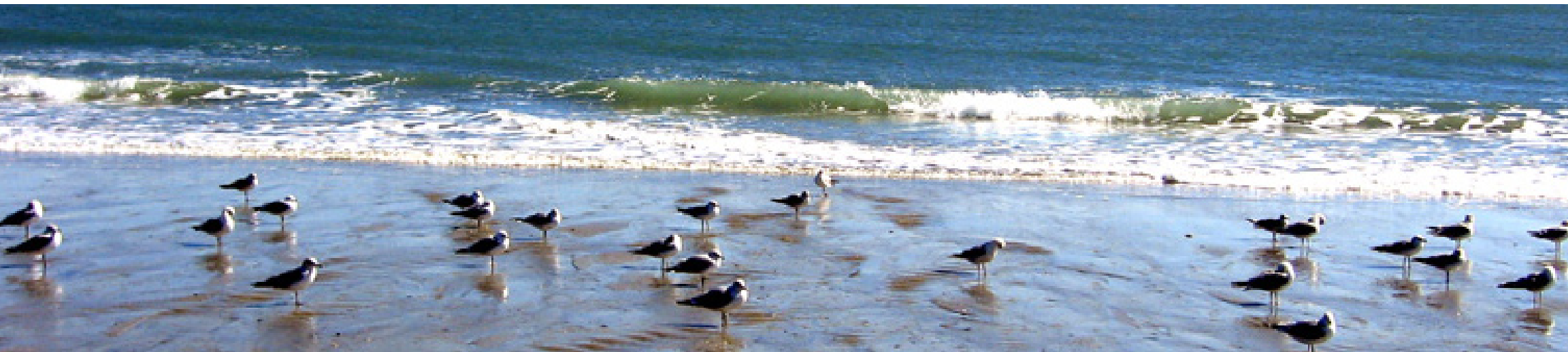
Special Purpose Districts

Myrtle Beach has several special purpose districts. The Airport Hazard Zone prevents high-rise development that may interfere with the flight paths and radar communications associated with the Myrtle Beach International Airport; the Cabana Section protects the unique scenic qualities of seven blocks of ocean-front property; the Coastal Protection Overlay Zone provides supplementary regulations for property seaward of the projected 50-year erosion control line; and the Downtown Overlay Zones provide incentives for development within the downtown redevelopment district.

Resources

City of Myrtle Beach
Planning Department
(843) 918-1050
Construction Services
(843) 918-1111

www.cityofmyrtlebeach.com



THE MUNICIPALITIES CONT.

16 **Surfside Beach**

The Building and Zoning Department is responsible for the interpretation and enforcement of all standards related to land development, zoning, and building.

Comprehensive Plan

Revised in 2005, the comprehensive plan for the Town of Surfside Beach seeks to manage future growth and development by focusing on three issues: 1) an accurate presentation of the Town's current condition; 2) a consensus long-range vision of the Town; and 3) a roadmap or blueprint of how to achieve the vision. This document serves to guide the public policy decisions associated with the proactive management of growth through progressive zoning controls and enforcement.

Zoning

The Town's zoning regulations seek to promote the health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community. Eight districts are currently utilized in consideration of the aforementioned purposes. In addition to establishing use regulations for each district, the zoning ordinance governs parking, tree protection, landscaping, signage, and shoreline protection.

Land Development Regulations

Similar to other regional communities, the Town maintains requirements for review and approval of all legal land alterations associated with subdivision or development of property. No plat of the subdivision of any land within the territorial jurisdiction of the Town of Surfside Beach may be filed with the Registrar of Deeds without first having been reviewed and approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Resources

Building and Zoning Department
(843) 913-6340

www.surfsidebeach.org



THE MUNICIPALITIES CONT.

18 **Loris**

The Building Department is responsible for administering the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance and Land Development Ordinance for the City. Department staff process and review all applications for annexation, rezoning, and development and serve as advisory liaison to the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Comprehensive Plan

Prepared in accordance with the Comprehensive Planning Act of 1994, this Comprehensive Plan (1996) is designed and intended to promote within the City of Loris public health, safety, morals, convenience, prosperity, general welfare, efficiency, and economy. As such, this Plan is to be used as a guide to the orderly physical, social, and economic growth and development of the community.

Zoning

Originally adopted in 1998, the City's zoning ordinance uses one of seven districts to manage the land uses associated with all properties incorporated into its jurisdiction. In addition to establishing use requirements by district, the ordinance governs community appearance, landscaping, buffering, open space, tree preservation, signage, and parking associated with maintenance and development of properties within the City.

Land Development Regulations

In order to ensure development that is in harmony with the provision of the comprehensive plan, staff and the Planning Commission review all proposed subdivisions for compliance with the standards of applicable ordinances. No subdivision plat may be recorded with the county without first having been approved by the Planning Commission.

Resources

City of Loris
Building Department
(843) 756-4004

www.cityofloris.com



THE MUNICIPALITIES CONT.

20 **Conway**

The Planning Department is responsible for zoning administration, land development activities, long-range comprehensive planning, annexation, and historic preservation. The City's professional planning staff process and review all applications for annexation, rezoning, and development and serve as liaisons for the Planning Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Community Appearance Board.

Comprehensive Plan

The City's current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1997. In compliance with state requirements that such plans be revised every ten years, planning entities are currently pursuing a major update. Amendments to the plan will consider the most effective way to assimilate inevitable growth while preserving the abundance of natural, cultural, and economic resources that give the county seat its historic character.

Zoning

Adopted in 1978, the City of Conway's zoning ordinance utilizes 17 zoning districts to manage growth in accordance with public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, appearance, prosperity, and general welfare. In addition to the standard districts, a number of special purpose overlay districts are utilized to achieve specific goals within a particular geography. These districts include the Commercial Design Review Overlay District, the Main Street Corridor Design Review District, and the Downtown Historic Design Review District. Additional zoning standards affecting the development and alteration of parcels and structures within the delineated boundaries are applied with the intent of enhancing the visual appeal, historic preservation, and design capability.

Land Development Regulations

The City of Conway utilizes land development regulations affecting the alteration, subdivision, and improvement of public and private property to encourage the development of an economically sound and stable municipality. In addition, the City seeks: to assure the timely provision of required streets, utilities, and other facilities and service to new land developments; to assure the adequate provision of safe and convenient traffic access and circulation; to assure the provision of needed public open spaces and building sites in land developments; and to assure the wise and timely development of new areas, and redevelopment in harmony with the comprehensive plan.

Resources

City of Conway
Planning Department
(843) 488-9888

www.cityofconway.com



22 **Aynor**

Municipal staff and consulting planners are responsible for the administration of the zoning ordinance and completion and revision of the comprehensive plan. Upon application to annex, rezone, subdivide, or commercially develop properties subject to its jurisdiction, town staff will place the applicant in contact with the appropriate review source.

Comprehensive Plan

The Town's first comprehensive plan was adopted in 1997 in order to guide the land-use goals for the community. The plan addresses seven elements: population, housing, economics, natural resources, cultural resources, community facilities, and land use. The Town had recently adopted a completed rewrite of the plan and is working with a local consultant to make sure dependent codes and ordinances are in accordance with plan updates.

Zoning

Originally adopted in 1977, the Town's zoning ordinances utilize one of six zoning districts to govern the use, density, and bulk of uses within its jurisdiction. Currently numerous amendments are being prepared by professional planning staff to address new growth in the area. In its basic form, the zoning ordinance covers district requirements, review procedures, signage standards, and tree preservation measures. Additional measures such as overlay districts are proposed through the ordinance amendments and will soon be enforced along major business corridors within Town limits.

Land Development Regulations

Land development regulations governing the platted improvement or alteration of property within the Town limits have been adopted by the Town.

Resources

Town of Aynor
Administrative Services
(843) 358-6231



SPECIAL PURPOSE ZONING DISTRICTS & PLANNING TECHNIQUES

24 The following special purpose zoning districts and planning techniques are utilized by local government bodies in Horry County. For details on these features, contact the planning or zoning department for the jurisdiction of interest.

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)

Traditional Neighborhood Development is a comprehensive planning system that includes a variety of housing types and land uses in a defined area. The variety of uses permits educational facilities, civic buildings, and commercial establishments to be located within walking distance of private homes. A TND is served by a network of paths, streets, and lanes suitable for pedestrians, as well as vehicles. This provides residents the option of walking, biking, or driving to places within their neighborhood. Present and future modes of transit are also considered during the planning stages. Horry County and the City of Myrtle Beach utilize TND standards on an elective basis to influence the design of development.

Cluster Development

Cluster development is the practice of grouping residential, commercial, or industrial uses within a subdivision or development for the purposes of maximizing unimproved open space. Such techniques allow for the reductions of otherwise applicable lot sizes in order to achieve greater density within the developable area of a particular tract. Cluster development gives flexibility to design a variety of neighborhoods with consideration of aesthetics, economy in the construction of streets and utilities, parks and recreational uses, and in a pattern which does not comply with the area, yard, and height requirements of traditional zones. Cluster development may be permitted by the zoning ordinance or by the use of a floating zone. The City of Myrtle Beach currently utilizes a cluster provision through its zoning ordinance.

Floating Zones

A floating zone is described in the text of the zoning ordinance, but is not mapped on the official zoning map like all other districts. This technique makes land-use regulations more flexible. Standards for such zones are established in the text of the zoning ordinance. There are currently no floating zones deployed in Horry County or its constituent jurisdictions.

Performance Zones

A performance zone specifies a minimum requirement for the maximum effect of a land use. As an alternative to specifying the use itself, performance standards ensure compatibility with surrounding development through the mitigation of impact. Such standards increase the level of flexibility enjoyed by the developer and may be a preferable alternative to Euclidian zoning (characterized by segregation of land uses into specific geographic districts) when dealing with such issues as noise, light, odor, and safety. Most jurisdictions in the County currently utilize traditional zoning techniques, but may be currently using performance standards to address specific issues or may be considering integration of such standards in future regulatory revisions.

Planned Development Districts (PDD)

These districts mix different types of compatible residential, commercial, and industrial uses within one cohesive development area. A planned development district is established through the rezoning process prior to development and characterized by unified site design for mixed-use development. The text of the plan provides the specific uses, densities, setbacks, and other requirements for the planned development. Under most circumstances, flexibility within such design is contingent on the overall public benefit of deviation from the traditional standards. Currently Horry County, the City of Conway, the City of Myrtle Beach, and the City of North Myrtle Beach actively utilize the planned development process to guide growth and development within the community.

Overlay Zones

Overlay zones place additional requirements or relax applicable requirements of an underlying zoning district. Such techniques are particularly useful when there is a special public interest in the area that does not coincide with the underlying boundaries of the applicable zoning district. Overlay requirements are attached to existing standards for a district and are used to further regulate areas of special consideration such as floodplains, conservation areas, commercial design corridors, and airport areas. Horry County, the City of Conway, the City of Myrtle Beach, and the City of North Myrtle Beach currently utilize overlay standards in addition to traditional zoning techniques.

LAND-USE CODES MATRIX - 2008

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Area	Zoning	Subdivision Regs./ Land Dev. Regs.	Overlay Districts	Landscape Ordinance	Tree Protection Ordinance	Sign Ordinance	Special Area Plans	Special Purpose Districts
Horry County	●	●	US 17 ● US 501 ● US 544 ● SC 707 ● SC 31 ● Holmes-town ●	●	●	●	Little River ● Garden City ● SC 579 ●	Multi-County Business Park ● Carolina Forest Development Agreement ● B&C Development Agreement ●
North Myrtle Beach	●	●		●	●	●		
Atlantic Beach	●	●		●	●	●		
Myrtle Beach	●		Coastal Protection ● OZ-50 Entertainment ● Downtown Redevelopment ●	●	●	●		
Surfside Beach	●	●		●	●	●		
Loris	●	●						
Conway	●		Main St. Corridor ● Commercial Design Review ● Downtown Historical Design Review ●		●	●		
Aynor	●	●	●		●	●		