



## Planning & Growth Management Department

601 E. Kennedy Blvd., 20<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Tampa, FL 33602-4932 (813) 272-5920  
April 2009



# Frequently Asked Questions

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## INTRODUCTION

The staff at the Planning and Growth Management Department has put together a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) to provide you with information that is commonly requested from the staff. This list provides information about the department and the services we provide. Throughout the FAQ's there are links to relating Internet Web Site pages. If the FAQ's do not contain the information you need, please feel free to call (813) 272-5920 and we will be happy to assist you.

The FAQ's are arranged by Department Divisions:

Planning and Zoning Services Division - identifies FAQ's on community based planning, current community plans. In addition you may also read about how to obtain your property folio number and zoning information.

Development Services Division - identifies FAQ's that contain information pertaining to building permits, contractor licensing, natural resources, inspections and records. This division is also responsible for emergency management planning including hazard mitigation, flood insurance and project impact.

Transportation Services Division - identifies FAQ's on how to get information on the Capital Improvement Program, roadway level of service classifications, traffic counts and current or future road projects.

The following is a listing of FAQ topics:

- [Building Permits](#)
- [Contractor Licensing](#)
- [Flood Protection](#)
- [Impact Fees](#)
- [Inspections](#)
- [Natural Resources](#)
- [Community Planning](#)
- [Records](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Zoning](#)



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## FLOOD PROTECTION

**Q: What is Hazard Mitigation?**

**A:** Hazard mitigation are actions taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and their property from natural or manmade hazards and their effects. For more detailed information on current county-wide projects, contact the Hazard Mitigation Section of the Planning and Growth Management Department (813) 307-4541.

**Q: Does the county offer any assistance in better preparing my structure from various disasters?**

**A:** The Planning and Growth Management Department has staff available to provide recommendations in better preparing for disasters and to provide information to individuals on Federal and State grant programs that are available. Staff also provides assistance in applying for these grants. For more information please call the Development Services Division at (813) 307-4441.

**Q: Do I need flood insurance?**

**A:** The mandatory purchase requirement applies to all forms of Federal or Federally related financial assistance for buildings located in a Special Flood Hazard Area. This requirement affects loans and grants for the purchase, construction, repair, or improvement of any publicly or privately owned buildings in the Special Flood Hazard Area. You may obtain information regarding the County's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program and the Community Rating System, please contact the Development Services Division at (813) 307-4441.

**Q: What is a Special Flood Hazard Area?**

**A:** Areas having a 1 percent chance of being flooded in any given year (100-year floodplain). Over a 30-year period, the life of most mortgages, there is at least a 26 percent chance that this area will be flooded. These Flood Zones are identified on the Flood Insurance Rate Map as Zones A, AO, AH, A1-A30, AE, A99, V, V1-V30, and VE.

**Q: How do I obtain a flood map?**

**A:** You may obtain a Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) by contacting the Hillsborough County Development Services Division at (813) 307-4441, or by contacting the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Map Service Center in Jessup, Maryland at 1-800-358-9616.

**Q: What is the difference between a floodway and a floodplain?**

**A:** A Floodplain (Flood Zone) is any land area susceptible to being inundated by floodwaters from any source. A Floodway is the channel of a river water course, or intermittent water course, and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without increasing the water surface elevation.

**Q: What Flood Zone am I in?**

**A:** You can receive your Flood Zone designation by contacting the Development Services Division at (813) 307-4441. You may also receive your designation by faxing (813) 272-5149.

**Q: Can I build in a Flood Zone?**

**A:** Yes. However, you must adhere to specific rules and regulations in the Hillsborough County Construction Code, Flood Damage Control Regulations, when building in a Special Flood Hazard Area.

**Q: My property is flooding, who can I contact?**

**A:** Flooding concerns can be reported to the Public Works Department at (813) 744-5518 or (813) 272-7021.

**Q: My neighbor is building a structure higher than my own. Who do I contact regarding possible drainage problems?**

**A:** To receive information regarding drainage problems caused by a structure under construction, contact the Construction Services Section of the Development Services Division at (813)635-7300.

**Q: Where do I obtain a Floodplain Elevation Certificate?**

**A:** Elevation Certificates may be obtained and completed by a land surveyor, who is authorized by law to certify elevation information. Sample forms may be obtained by contacting the Development Services Division at (813) 307-4441.

**Q: What is my base flood elevation?**

**A:** Your base flood elevation indicates the water surface elevation resulting from a flood that has a one percent chance of equaling or exceeding that level in any given year. Base flood elevations may be obtained by contacting the Development Services Division at (813) 307-4441.

**Q: Is there any place where I can receive/review technical documents on property protection measures?**

**A:** Hillsborough County creates a library of technical information that should be available at all permit offices including the 19<sup>th</sup> floor downtown, the South County office, and the Plant City office. Flood protection information is also available at the Public Library in downtown Tampa. Furthermore, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) website has a comprehensive “how to” section on protection measures that can be viewed or downloaded at the following url address: <http://www.fema.gov/mit/how2.htm>.

**Q: What is Project Impact?**

**A:** Project Impact-Building a Regional Disaster Resistant Community encourages citizens, public entities, and private organizations to use their time and talents to protect themselves from the devastating effects of natural disasters. The Tampa Bay region has been added to the list of Project Impact communities because it has one of the highest risks in the nation to major economic loss from hurricanes and flooding. For further information, contact the Hazard Mitigation Section at (813) 276-8426 or visit the following website: <http://www.fema.gov/impact> or <http://www.tbrpc.org/projectimpact/>.

## **COMMUNITY PLANNING**

**Q: What is Community-Based Planning?**

**A:** In 1998, the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved a Community Based Planning Program. Community Based Plans are designed to address and offer solutions to the community’s critical planning issues and concerns, and to protect the qualities and characteristics that define what is unique and special about the community. A community-wide consensus will be established on an action plan that has goals, objectives, polices, and proposals for guiding growth, regulating development, and delivering public services consistent with the resident’s priorities.

**Q: What are the current Community-Based projects that are underway?**

Apollo Beach Community Plan	John Healey, (813) 276-8393
Brandon Advantage Center	Bill Lamboy, (813) 276-8337
Brandon Area-Wide Community Plan	Bill Lamboy, (813) 276-8337
Brandon Boulevard Overlay	Bill Lamboy, (813) 276-8337
Brandon Main Street	Bill Lamboy, (813) 276-8337
Citrus Park Village Community Plan	Charner Reese, (813) 272-5828
Community Entry Sign Guidelines	Carmen Telesca, (813) 272-5828
East Lake Orient Park Community Plan	Patricia Ortiz, (813) 276-8387
Egypt Lake Community Plan	Patricia Ortiz, (813) 276-8387
Hillsborough Avenue Overlay	Bill Lamboy, (813) 276-8337
I-4 Corridor Study	Steve Griffin, (813) 272-5940/ Joe Incorvia, (813) 276-8455
North Dale Mabry Corridor Update	John Healey, (813) 276-8393
Northwest Plan	Bill Lamboy, (813) 276-8337
Riverview Downtown Plan	Patricia Ortiz, (813) 276-8387
Ruskin CP & Downtown District	John Healey, (813) 276-8393
Seffner Community Plan	John Healey, (813) 276-8393

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Ruskin CP & Downtown District	John Healey, (813) 276-8393
Seffner Community Plan	John Healey, (813) 276-8393
Sun City Center Plan	Paula Harvey, (813) 276-8351
Thonotosassa Community Plan	John Healey, (813) 276-8393
Thonotosassa Main Street Overlay	John Healey, (813) 276-8393
Town & Country Community Plan	Bill Lamboy, (813) 276-9338
Town & Country Town Center	Bill Lamboy, (813) 276-9338
UAC 131 <sup>st</sup> Avenue	Charner Reese, (813) 272-5828
University Area Community	Charner Reese, (813) 272-5828
US 41 Overlay (Apollo beach/Ruskin)	Bill Lamboy, (813) 276-9338
Web Page	Marie Theodore, (813) 276-8680
Wimauma Downtown	Bill Lamboy, (813) 276-9338
Wimauma Village Community Plan	Bill Lamboy, (813) 276-9338

or log on to [www.hccommunityplanning.com](http://www.hccommunityplanning.com)

**Q: What is a DRI?**

**A:** A Development of Regional Impact (DRI) is a development, which, because of its character, magnitude, or location, would have a substantial effect upon the health, safety, or welfare of citizens of more than one county. Typical DRI projects include airports, hospitals, schools, mines, hotels, marinas, recreational vehicle parks, amusement facilities, industrial, office, retail, residential, and mixed-use development. For more information, contact John Healey at (813) 276-8393.



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### **BUILDING PERMITS**

**Q: Where are the Hillsborough County Permitting offices located?**

**A:** Full service permitting offices are located throughout Hillsborough County. Main Office: Development Services Division, 601 E. Kennedy Blvd., 19<sup>th</sup> Floor, (813) 272-5920.

Satellite Offices: Northwest Office, 120972 Anderson Rd., (813) 264-8527  
Plant City Office, 302 Michigan St., Room #2, (813) 757-3811  
South County Office, 3038 SR 674, (813) 671-7657

Permits that do not require a plans review, non-structural permits, may be obtained at the fourth Satellite office, NetPark, 5701 E. Hillsborough Avenue, Suite 245, (813) 635-7300.

**Q: What building codes does Hillsborough County use?**

**A:** Hillsborough County currently uses the Florida Building Code – Building, Plumbing, Mechanical and Fuel Gas, 2001 Edition; and the National Electrical Code, 1999 Edition. A listing of other applicable codes may be obtained from any building permitting office.

**Q: For what types of construction do I need a permit?**

**A:** A permit is required by any owner, authorized agent, or contractor who desires to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical, or plumbing system.

**Q: Do I go to the City or County to apply for a permit?**

**A:** If your property lies within Unincorporated Hillsborough County, you must apply for your building permit at one of our permitting offices. If your property lies within the City of Tampa, City of Temple Terrace or City of Plant City, you must contact their respective Building Department.

**Q: What is a triple-fee penalty?**

**A:** A triple fee penalty is assessed when work is performed prior to the issuance of a permit. The penalty is triple the fee of each permit required for the project.

**Q: Can I build my own house?**

**A:** Yes. The property must be in your name and you must reside in the home for at least one year after its completion. Brochures containing information regarding the residential permitting process are available at the Development Services Division's main office or at any of the satellite offices.

**Q: Can a homeowner pull permits on a rental structure?**

**A:** Rental property is considered a commercial structure. In accordance with Chapter 489 Florida Statutes, a licensed contractor is required to perform work on commercial structures.

**Q: Do I have to be a licensed contractor to perform work on my own house?**

**A:** Property owners can obtain their own permits if they own and occupy their own home, or if the residence they are constructing is for the use and occupancy of the homeowner only. The owner must sign an affidavit assuming responsibility for construction supervision.

**Q: I would like to place a manufactured home on my property. Can I do this as the homeowner?**

**A:** No. A Manufactured Home installation permit must be obtained by a licensed set-up contractor. Associated permits for Electrical, Mechanical, and Plumbing installation may be obtained by the homeowner. If the property owner and homeowner are not the same at the time the permits are applied for, you will need an authorization letter from the property owner or a sales contract between you and the property owner to obtain the permit. Brochures containing information regarding manufactured home permitting are available at the Development Services Division's main office or at any of the satellite offices.

**Q: What information do I need to provide in order to obtain a building permit?**

**A:** To begin the process, you will need the property folio number and legal description. The type of information you will need to provide is dependent upon the type of permit you are pulling. Checklists for the various permit types may be obtained at the Development Services Division's main office or at any of the satellite offices.

**Q: Where can I obtain my Florida Energy Efficiency and manual "J" short forms?**

**A:** Florida Energy Efficiency forms can be obtained at the Development Services Division main office or one of the satellite offices. Manual "T" forms are obtained from your mechanical contractor.

**Q: How long does it take to get a building permit?**

**A:** Residential permits typically take 10 working days to process. Commercial permits may take 6 weeks to process.

**Q: How long is a permit valid?**

**A:** A permit will expire after six months if no inspections have been performed. If the project has been inspected, the permit will be valid for an additional six months from the inspection date. If the permit is allowed to expire without all inspections being obtained or with work partially completed, a new or reissued permit must be obtained or the partial work removed. If you need a new or reissued permit, contact the Development Services Division's main office or at any of the satellite offices.

**Q: What permit fees are required?**

**A:** Permit fees depend upon the type of permit being issued. Fee schedules may be obtained at the Development Services Division's main office or at any of the satellite offices.

**Q: Do I have to pay impact fees?**

**A:** Impact fees are assessed on all new construction. The amount of impact fees is determined by the amount and type of impact typically generated by the particular use of the property. Impact fees must be paid prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy, in other words, before the property is used.

**Q: My permit has expired. How do I receive an extension?**

**A:** Permits cannot be extended after they have expired. However, the Building Official can grant a one time extension of an unexpired permit under unusual circumstances. This extension can not exceed 6 months. If a permit is allowed to expire without all inspections being obtained or with work partially completed, a new or reissued permit must be obtained or the partial work removed. If you need a new or reissued permit, contact the Development Services Division's main office or one of the satellite offices.

**Q: Can I receive a refund on my building permit?**

**A:** A refund cannot be made on permits where construction has begun. If construction has not begun, a written refund request must be submitted within 60 days of permit issuance to receive a refund of 50% of the original fees. Written requests must include the green validated copy of the original permit in order to be processed.

**Q: Where do I obtain a septic tank permit?**

**A:** Septic tank permits may be obtained at the Hillsborough County Health Department (813) 272-6320.

**Q: How do I obtain a driveway permit or a permit for work within a County right-of-way?**

**A:** Applications for driveway permits may be obtained by contacting the Development Services Division's main office (813) 272-5600 or at a satellite office.

**Q: When is Notice of Commencement required?**

**A:** A Notice of Commencement (NOC) is generally required on projects that have a value of \$2,500 or greater. Notice of Commencements may be filed with the Clerk of Circuit Court Office, Courthouse, Room 114, 419 Pierce St., Tampa, (813) 276-8100. A certified copy of the NOC must be submitted to the Development Services Division's main office or one of the satellite offices before the first inspection if scheduled. As an option, you may have your NOC recorded by the Development Services Division by submitting a completed NOC at time of permit application, and paying a fee of \$9.00 in addition to the standard \$5.00 fee.

**Q: How do I obtain a TECO release of power?**

**A:** TECO will not release electrical power until notified by the County that a project is completed. A project is not considered complete until all inspections have been passed and all fees have been paid, including impact fees.

**Q: How do I obtain an early release of power?**

**A:** The general contractor or homeowner may obtain an early release of power under certain conditions. In order for a general contractor to obtain an early release of power, the project must meet the following requirements:

- A letter requesting an early release of power must be on file with the Electrical Release Section, (813) 635-7470.
- All electrical work must be inspected and approved.
- All fees, including impact fees, must be paid.
- The project must have water and sewer acceptance (if on county water and sewer), or septic and well approval through the Hillsborough County Health Department.
- If applicable, a Flood Elevation Certificate must be submitted.

In order for a homeowner to obtain an early release of power, the project must meet the following requirements:

- All work must be inspected and approved. However, an early release may be obtained without the Landscaping Final Inspection.
- All fees, including impact fees, must be paid.
- The project must have water and sewer acceptance (if on county water and sewer), or septic and well approval through the Hillsborough County Health Department.
- If applicable, a Flood Elevation Certificate must be submitted.

## **CONTRACTOR LICENSING**

**Q: Where can I get a contractor's license?**

**A:** Contractor's Licensing is located at our Net Park Office at

5701 E. Hillsborough Avenue, Suite 2459.  
Phone: (813) 635-7308 or (813) 635-7309.

**Q: What do I need to get a contractor's license?**

**A:** You will be required to file a complete application, obtain approval of that application from the licensing Board, pay appropriate fees and pass the Block and Associates examination for your licensing category. To receive additional information, please contact Contractor's Licensing.

**Q: Where can I take the Block and Associates examination?**

**A:** You may take the examination at any location Block and Associates uses. Locally, examinations are administered at Hillsborough Community College Campuses.

**Q: Is the examination given in other languages?**

**A:** An applicant may make arrangements to take a translator with him/her to read the questions for them. In such cases, the exam must be taken at the Block (Exeperior) office in Gainesville, Florida.

**Q: How will I know what to study?**

**A:** Contractor Licensing will provide you with a list of books from which the examination questions are prepared. You may contact the Block and Associates Exeperior Office at (877) 624-2562 or a local contractor's book store to order the books suggested.

**Q: How do I register my State Certification with Hillsborough County and City of Tampa?**

**A:** The Net Park satellite office processes all registrations for Hillsborough County and City of Tampa. In order to obtain a listing of the registration requirements please contact Contractor's Licensing.

**Q: How do I obtain a Hillsborough County contractor's license when I have a license in another county?**

**A:** Prior to receiving a license in Hillsborough County you must take the Block and Associates examination. If you have received a license from another county without taking an examination, you will be required to take the examination before receiving a license in Hillsborough County. Hillsborough County will honor examinations taken in other jurisdictions as long as they meet the minimum passing scores as required by Hillsborough County. In such cases, a Reciprocity Form will have to be completed and additional requirements will have to be met.

**Q: Do I have to have a contractor's license and take the exam if I am working under General, Building or Residential contractor?**

**A:** If you are working under a General, Building or Residential contractor on a single family or duplex residential structure, and the work being performed could have been performed by the General, Building or Residential contractor, you are not required to be certified as a contractor. However, you may be required to obtain a local occupational license if you live or have an office in Hillsborough County.

**Q: How can I contact the State Department of Business and Professional Regulation and the Electrical Contractor's Licensing Board?**

**A:** For the Department of Business and Professional Regulation please call (850) 727-6530 or visit their web site at <http://www.statefl.us/dbpr/index.shtml> For the Electrical Contractor's Licensing Board, please call (850) 488-3109.

## **INSPECTIONS**

**Q: Do I need an inspection?**

**A:** Yes. All construction permits obtained through the Development Services Division require an inspection unless specifically exempted as part of the permit.

**Q: Do my permits and plans have to be posted on the job site for the inspection?**

**A:** Yes. All permits and plans must be posted on site.

**Q: How do I schedule an inspection?**

**A:** Inspections can be requested 7 days a week from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. through the automated IVRS (Integrated Voice Response System). IVRS is an automated system that will allow you to schedule, cancel or check the status of an inspection.

**Q: How do I get instructions for the use of the IVRS System?**

**A:** Recorded instructions are available when you call the IVRS. Pamphlets giving detailed instructions on the use of the IVRS are available at the Development Services Division's main office (813) 272-5920 or at any of the satellite offices.

**Q: When will my inspector arrive?**

**A:** Inspection requests phoned into the IVRS by 10:00 p.m. will generally be made the following workday. Unfortunately, inspection volume can not be determined in advance and occasionally an inspection must be "rolled over" to the next day. Because of this volume fluctuation and varying times required for each inspection, we can not provide specific times for inspections.

**Q: How do I find the results of my inspection?**

**A:** You may check the placard at your job site, call the IVRS or visit our web site at <http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/pgm/devsvcs/permits/home.html>.

**Q: Do I have to schedule a reinspection if my job was rejected?**

**A:** Yes. You may reschedule your reinspection through the IVRS.

**Q: I would like to speak to the inspector who was at my jobsite. How do I contact him?**

**A:** Inspectors are in their respective offices from 7:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. on all workdays. At other times voice messages may be left for the inspector.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

**Q: Do I need a permit to remove a tree? How long does it take to receive a permit?**

**A:** If you reside on residential property within the County you will need a permit to remove a tree which has a DBH (trunk diameter at 4.5 feet above the ground) of 12 inches or greater. To receive an application for tree removal, please contact a member of the Natural Resources Team at (813) 272-5600.

Within five (5) working days of receiving the application by the County, your tree will be evaluated to determine if it meets the removal criteria specified in the Hillsborough County Land Development Code. The applicant listed on the application will be notified by mail whether the permit has been issued or denied.

**Q: What criteria do you use to determine whether a tree can be removed?**

**A:** The criteria are established within the [Land Development Code](#). You may obtain a copy of these criteria by contacting (813) 272-5920.

**Q: What are exempt trees?**

**A:** An exempt tree is defined by the Land Development Code as having invasive growing characteristics, is highly susceptible to freeze damage, and is detrimental to the survival of native plants and animals. A permit is not required for the removal of an exempt tree. Please call (813) 2725920 for a list of exempt tree species.

**Q: Who do I contact to have a tree removed from a County right-of-way?**

**A:** To have a tree removed from a County right-of-way, you will need to contact the Service Unit of the Roadway Maintenance Division for the area you live in.

- Central Service Unit (813) 744-5518 - Serves the area north of Madison Avenue/Bloomingdale Road, east of Bruce B. Downs Boulevard/Interstate 275, west of McIntosh/Valrico Roads.
- East Service Unit (813) 757-3861 - Serves the area east of McIntosh/Valrico Roads.
- West Service Unit (813) 554-5006 - Serves the area west of Bruce B. Downs Boulevard/Interstate 275.
- South Service Unit (813) 671-7619. Serves the area south of Madison Avenue/Bloomingdale Road.

**Q: Do I need a permit to trim a tree? How much can I trim?**

**A:** You do not need a permit to trim a tree. However, pruning should be done according to the National Standards for Pruning, ANSI A300. No more than 25% of the leaf area should be removed at one time, and proper pruning cuts should be made. If a tree is pruned so severely that it is expected to die or is no longer considered a viable tree, it may be considered an "effective tree removal" and may be a violation of the Hillsborough County Land Development Code.

**Q: My neighbor's tree is hazardous. Can the County require them to remove it?**

**A:** To report a hazardous tree on someone else's property, you should call Hillsborough County Code Enforcement at (813) 744-5568 ext. 110.

**Q: My neighbor is removing a tree on their property. Who can I contact to determine if they have received a permit?**

**A:** If you would like to report an unpermitted tree removal, contact the Natural Resources Section of the Planning & Growth Management Department at (813) 272-5920.

**Q: What are wetlands?**

**A:** Wetlands are environmentally sensitive areas of interface between land and water. These areas consist of various types of wet habitats where the land is wet for some period of time each year but, not necessarily permanently wet. Many wetlands occur in areas where surface water collects or where underground water discharges to the surface, making the area wet for extended periods of time. Other wetlands occur along our coasts, and are created by the tide. Water saturation (hydrology) largely determines how the soil develops and the types of plant and animal communities living in and on the soil. The presence of water creates conditions that favor the growth of specially adapted plants (hydrophytes) and promote the development of characteristic wetland (hydric) soils.

**Q: How do I find out if there are wetlands on my property?**

**A:** The only accurate way to find out whether or not wetlands exist on your property is to have a wetland evaluation (delineation) performed by the staff of the Environmental Protection Commission. However, much can be determined by the examination of soils maps and aerial photography.

You may visit the Development Services Division and, with a staff Environmental Scientist, view the maps and arials available. This service is free and provides a fairly accurate identification of wetlands on your property without a site visit.

You may also visit with an Environmental Scientist of the Wetlands Management Division of the Environmental Protection Commission. This will give you a good idea as to the potential wetlands on your property as well as provide you with any historic wetland permitting on your property. This service is also free but an appointment is appreciated. To contact a member of the Wetlands Division of the Environmental Protection Commission, please call 272-7104.

**Q: If I have wetlands on my property will I receive a reduction in my property taxes?**

**A:** In all probability, yes. A confirmation of property tax reductions must, however, be addressed to the Hillsborough County Property Appraiser's Office. They may be reached by calling (813) 272-5519.

**Q: What is the difference between a Wetland Conservation Area and a Wetland Preservation Area?**

**A:** Within Hillsborough County, pursuant to the Conservation Element of the Hillsborough County Comprehensive Plan, environmentally sensitive areas are categorized as Conservation and Preservation Areas. Conservation Areas include the following types of wetlands, natural water bodies, and uplands: freshwater marshes, shallow grassy ponds, hardwood swamps, cypress swamps, natural shorelines, Class III Waters' and sand pine-scrub communities. Preservation Areas include the following types of wetlands, natural water bodies and uplands: coastal marshes, mangrove swamps, marine grassbeds, natural beaches and dunes, Class I and II Waters", aquatic preserves, critical habitat for endangered, threatened or rare species and State wilderness areas.

\*Class I Waters - Surface waters that are used as a source for public potable water supplies.

Class II Waters - Coastal waters which actually or can potentially support recreational or commercial shellfish propagation and harvesting.

Class III Waters - All waters that are suitable for recreational body contact and for the propagation of fish and wildlife, but are not classified as Class I or II Waters.

**Q: What is a wetland setback? Can I build in this area?**

**A:** Wetland setbacks are areas that provide protection around a delineated wetland during land development activities as well as post land development activities. Wetland setbacks are 30 feet for Conservation Areas and 50 feet for Preservation Areas. Certain land alteration activities are permissible within a wetland setback area and other activities are not. Transitional grading of fill may be permissible upon staffs review and acceptance. However, the construction of any structural improvements within the setback is prohibited unless a variance or administrative waiver is obtained. The particular variance avenue will be subject to the conditions of the situation and can best be determined by contacting a member of the Natural Resources Team at (813)272-5920 for further information.

**Q: What is a wetland delineation?**

**A:** Wetland delineations are conducted by the Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Commission, and are simply the act of establishing the boundary between wetlands and uplands (or non-wetlands). Your property will be evaluated for the presence of wetlands based upon three criteria: wetland vegetation, hydric soils and hydrology. If you would like to request additional information regarding a wetland delineation, please contact the Wetlands Division of the Environmental Protection Commission at (813) 272-7104.

**Q: Can I build on my property if I have wetlands?**

**A:** The presence of a wetland on your property may not prohibit construction on the property but may restrict it. The first step is to determine if there is enough upland area on your property (or non-wetland area) to construct your project. In accordance with the Hillsborough County Land Development Code, agriculturally zoned properties must meet the minimum ratio of uplands (or non-wetland) to

wetlands to be considered a "buildable parcel". In order to determine if your property meets the minimum requirements, you may contact the Code Administration Section or Planning and Zoning Division at (813) 272-5920.

In cases where encroachments into wetland areas are unavoidable, please contact the Wetlands Division of the Environmental Protection Commission at 272-7104. Encroachments into wetland areas must be permitted and mitigated.

**Q: Do I need a permit to place fill on my property?**

**A:** There are several situations that may require permits:

- Building a structure that requires foundation fill. These structures include residential homes, commercial buildings, and auxiliary buildings. Additional information about these may be obtained at the Development Services Division at (813) 307-4511.
- To alter the grade of the land to address a drainage concern or to alter past excavated areas to restore historic drainage patterns will require a grading permit on residential properties or a fill permit on nonresidential sites. Additional information about these may be obtained at the Development Services Division (813) 272-8356.

Permits are not required for minor filling that does not exceed three inches in depth or if the project meets the exemption requirements of the Hillsborough County Land Development Code Section 4.01.01C.

**Q: Who maintains the drainage ponds within subdivisions?**

**A:** The Roadway Maintenance Division maintains County roads and right-of-way areas and several ponds. You may contact the Roadway Maintenance Division by calling (813) 744-5640. However, if the pond is owned by individual property owners or a homeowners association, then they have sole responsibility for maintaining that area.

**Q: Do I need a permit to clear vegetation on my property?**

**A:** Yes. When using construction equipment or mowing within a native vegetated community. Please call the Development Services Division at (813) 272-8356 for more information.

**Q: What is grubbing?**

**A:** Grubbing is defined as the removal of understory vegetation including the removal of any tree with a trunk diameter of less than 5 inches by the use of mechanical equipment. However, grubbing does not allow the removal of vegetation from environmentally sensitive areas, native plant communities, or from under the canopy of larger trees without a review from Natural Resources staff. Please call (813) 272-8356 for further information.

**Q: Do I need a permit to conduct agriculturally oriented activities?**

**A:** In most instances, permits are not required to conduct agricultural activities. To determine if your activity is exempt, you must have your project reviewed by Natural Resources staff, (813) 272-8356.

Permits will be required on agricultural lands when:

- The use is not bona fide agricultural operation allowed in the zoning category.
- The activity will impact environmentally sensitive areas.
- More than 500 cubic yards of material will be hauled off site.
- The activity is not normal and necessary for the agricultural operation.

**Q: How do I apply for an agricultural exemption for land alteration activities?**

**A:** Exemptions from permitting requirements can be obtained by contacting Natural Resources staff at (813) 272-8356.

**Q: What is Significant Wildlife Habitat?**

**A:** Significant Wildlife Habitat is defined by the Hillsborough County Land Development Code as *"contiguous stands of natural plant communities which have the potential to support healthy and diverse populations of wildlife and which have been identified on the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Natural Systems and Land Use Cover Inventory for Hillsborough County"*. Natural plant communities are those plant communities which may be an upland or wetland type. Representative upland communities are pine flatwoods, hammocks, sandhill and sand pine scrub systems. Representative wetland communities are cypress and hardwood swamps, freshwater and saltwater marshes, mangrove forests, etc. Please call the Natural Resource Biologist of the Planning and Growth Management Department at (813) 272-5920 for further explanation of significant wildlife habitat.

**Q: My property has been designated Significant Wildlife Habitat, what does that mean?**

**A:** The designation of your property as Significant Wildlife Habitat means that your property retains an environmentally sensitive resource as defined by the Hillsborough County Land Development Code. In accordance with the upland wildlife habitat regulations of the Land Development Code, a percentage of the designated significant wildlife habitat will be required for preservation if a development action is proposed for the property. The preservation amount would be contingent on the type of upland habitat existing on the property. Please contact the Planning and Growth Management Natural Resource Biologist at (813) 272-5920 for additional information.

**Q: If I do protect upland habitat on my property, will I receive a reduction in my property taxes?**

**A:** In all probability, yes. Consult with the County Property Appraiser at (813) 272-6100 to learn how these areas will be appraised.

**Q: What is a listed species? Who regulates listed species?**

**A:** The Hillsborough County Land Development Code defines listed species as *all species of plants and animals which are labeled as a species of special concern, threatened or endangered in accordance to Chapter 39, Florida Administrative Code, or Chapter 581, Florida Statutes*. Listed species are regulated by both the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**Q: If I have listed species and Significant Wildlife Habitat on my property, can I build on it?**

**A:** The existence of listed species or the presence of significant wildlife habitat does not prohibit construction on the property. Certain restrictions may exist subject to the type of listed species existing on the property. Any restrictions addressing listed species will be determined by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The presence of Essential and Significant Wildlife Habitat as defined by the County's Land Development Code will restrict the development of the property to the extent the Upland Habitat Ordinance is satisfied but will not prohibit the use of the property in accordance to the property's zoning.

## **RECORDS**

**Q: Where can I get an address for my property?**

**A:** Addresses may be obtained at the Building Services Division's main office at Netpark, or at the Plant City or South County satellite offices. You will need to provide a completed building permit application, site plan, folio number and legal description of the property (along with a copy of the recorded deed if the property is not within a platted subdivision).

**Q: Where can I get my property folio number?**

**A:** Your folio number may be found on your annual property tax statement. Folio numbers may also be obtained by calling the Property Appraiser's Office at (813) 272-6100 or at their web site; <http://www.hcpafl.org/>

**Q: When is a Certificate of Occupancy required and how do I receive one?**

**A:** Certificate of Occupancy (C.O.) is required whenever a new structure is built or any time there has been a change in the use of an existing building. A C.O. is issued after all inspections have been approved and all fees have been paid (including impact fees). You may request your C.O. by calling the Electrical Release Section, (813) 635-7470.

**Q: How do I make a building records request?**

**A:** Requests must be made by calling (813)307-4566 to schedule an appointment. Building records as described below are temporarily housed at the County Center, 19<sup>th</sup> floor. Call for an appointment and additional information. The following information is needed to research records:

- Permits prior to 1971 - Legal description of property, approximate year the structure was built, owner's name, and old address or route and box number.
- Permits 1971-1984 - Legal description (including section/township/range) and property address.
- Permits 1985-1990 - Property address
- Permits 1990 - present - Property address or owner's name

**Q: What fees are associated with records request?**

**A:** Copying of any records by photographic means: \$2.00 per sheet normal size and \$5.00 plan size.

**Q: Are there any records which are not available?**

**A:** Permits and Plans prior to 1970 are not available.



## Planning & Growth Management Department

601 E. Kennedy Blvd., 20<sup>th</sup> Floor  
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# Frequently Asked Questions

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## TRANSPORTATION

**Q: What is the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) work program ?**

**A:** The CIP is a financial plan of approved capital projects (including transportation), their cost, and timing over a six-year period. The CIP is adopted each year, prior to the start of the County's fiscal year, which starts October 1<sup>st</sup> and ends September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Q: What is the basis of determining right-of-way dedications during rezonings ?**

**A:** Right-of-way (ROW) dedications are based on the need for future roadway laneage as shown on Map 24 MPO 2020 Needs Plan and Appendix E, Needed Improvements, Highway Component in the Transportation Element of the Hillsborough County Comprehensive Plan. This map and appendix is used to determine the locational criteria used in regulating the maximum square footages for certain land uses.

**Q: What is the County's policy regarding landscaping County Roadways?**

**A:** The County does not have sufficient resources to meet every request for landscaping on our roadways. The County does, however, provide landscaping for new road construction. The County spends up \$50,000 per linear mile for the construction of new roads and for existing roads that are widened.

The County does have a process for a neighborhood group or organization that wants landscaping installed on an existing county road. The group would need to agree to provide the landscaping materials and to provide ongoing maintenance of the landscaping.

Once an acceptable plan is established, a maintenance agreement between the organization and the County is required. Based upon the complexity of the landscaping plan, the Planning & Growth Management Department reviews the plan for plant species proposed, maintenance requirements, and impact to traffic. The lead staff person who can assist you in this process is Jerry Taylor (813) 276-8319.

**Q: What is the County's policy regarding street closings?**

**A:** Generally, it is the policy of the Board of County Commissioners not to close off streets but rather maintain access between subdivisions as per Section 6.04.03 of the Hillsborough County Land Development Code (LDC). This is to increase the connectivity of the street system and reduce the number and length of trips. However, a number of options other than closing off streets exist for enhancing traffic safety and the elimination of cut-through traffic.

**Q: What is the County Residential Traffic Control (RTC) program?**

**A:** Hillsborough County has established a Residential Traffic Control (RTC) program managed by the Public Works Department. Common traffic calming improvements are implemented in the RTC program such as speed humps. There are many options and they are described in the RTC handbook.

Please contact Kirby at (813) 272-5912, for further information on the process of the RTC program and to schedule a meeting.

**Q: How are roadway functional classifications determined for the RTC Program?**

**A:** While no recent documentation or map exists which classify all the roads within Hillsborough County, we do review roads whenever requested by the Public Works Department. These requests are normally as a result of concerned citizens requesting speed humps or other forms of speed control.

When Transportation Division Planning staff review roads, we use a "point system" which gives a range of points (*see below*) to a road, whether it be a local, collector or arterial. Staff's classification is based primarily on that range. When we go out into the field to look at some of the marginal roads which may either be a local or collector, we also take into consideration any future development patterns which may have been reviewed and approved by the BOCC but may not have begun construction.

Regarding what is reviewed, the points and the how they are assessed, in 1988 a consultant reviewed the County's system for reviewing the classification. Their recommendations were as follows:

1. Character Length (the length of the road) was given 1 point per mile with a maximum of 30 points.
2. Existing access control: Full – 15 points  
Partial – 10 points  
Minimum – 5 points
3. Traffic Volume – 1 point per 1,000 vehicles per day with a maximum of 30 points.
4. Roadway Laneage: 2 lanes – 10 points  
2 lanes divided – 15 points  
4 lanes – 20 points  
4 lanes divided – 25 points

*(other laneage scenarios such as 6 lanes and freeways are also within the review procedure)*

*Access control* can be illustrated as follows:

*Full control* is where staff has total say as to where and/or if access can be obtained. (i.e., a freeway or an arterial road.)

*Partial control* is where staff has a little more options. (i.e., a road with subdivision streets and single family development fronting the road.) We can only partially control the location of the access points from intersections for example.

*Minimum control* is a situation in which access can be obtained along the frontage of every home. This is usually associated with the local road scenario.

The breakdown of the roadway classifications is as follows:

- 0 - 19 points are local roads
- 20 – 39 points are collector roads
- 40 – 64 points are minor arterial
- 65 – 105 are principal arterial

**Q: What is level of service (LOS) of county roads?**

**A:** The Board of County Commissioners has adopted a Level of Service (LOS) of “D” for roads located in urban areas and “C” for roads located in rural areas. The State requires that the BOCC adopt LOS standards and that development only be approved on roadways meeting these standards. The LOS may change depending upon the area type for which it serves. While based on the Florida Department of Transportation’s Generalized Level of Service Tables, the actual capacities of the LOS may vary depending upon several variables including roadway laneage, the number of signals per mile, the time of the signalization along the roadway link, and the area type.

**Q: How can I obtain traffic count information?**

**A:** Traffic counts are updated on a periodical basis by the County, Florida Department of Transportation, and local cities. When a traffic count is updated depends upon the current LOS of the roadway. Preference is given to annual monitoring for roads that are failing or are nearing unacceptable levels. Actual counts are converted into an AADT (Average Annual Daily Traffic) volume for documentation in the *Hillsborough County Roadway Level of Service Report*. Use of this information in conjunction with the LOS capacity of the road, helps to determine the availability for development along regulated roadways. *(Please see the latest Hillsborough County Roadway Level of Service Report for additional procedures and definitions used to determine the LOS).*

**Q: Will there be a concurrency problem with a project?**

**A:** Concurrency is established on a case-by-case basis. Because the level of service tables are based on generalized information and in some cases a traffic count which may be a year or two old, a detailed analysis may show that additional capacity exists on roads which are shown in the Hillsborough County Roadway Inventory and Level of Service Report as unacceptable. Further studies as provided by the developer should be approved by county staff prior to the instituting of any additional studies and should address the roadway segment, actual signal timings, new traffic counts and new level of service capacity volumes using approved highway capacity methodologies.

**Q: Why are trucks using a road that is not a designated Truck Route?**

**A:** The truck route resolution allows trucks to exit a truck route and take the shortest, most direct route to their origin or destination. This provision must exist so that trucks can reach any site in the County to deliver goods and/or services. It allows trucks to drive on roads that are not designated truck routes when necessary to reach their origin or destination.

**Q: Community Investment Tax: how is this going to work to help with addressing transportation needs?**

**A:** The County and each municipality may allocate funding to transportation from their shares of the revenue. The County committed 28%, or \$48.6 million in its first (FY 97 – FY 03) allocation of CIT funds. The County committed 24%, or \$52.3 million in its second (FY 03 – FY 08) allocation.

**Q: What is a congested roadway?**

**A:** A congested road is described as one that is carrying more traffic (volume) than it was designed to handle (capacity). Florida's Growth Management Rules require that governments and the Florida Department of Transportation set "level-of-service standards" for the major roadways within their jurisdictions.

Level-of-Service (LOS) is one of the most common forms of congestion measures used by planners and engineers. Level-of-Service represents a qualitative assessment of road users' perceptions of roadway quality of traffic flow. LOS is represented by the letters "A" through "F", with "A" representing the most favorable conditions and "F" representing the least favorable. In Hillsborough County, most of the urban roads have a LOS "D" standard and the rural roads have a LOS "C" standard. (The LOS standard for each road is found in each jurisdiction's Comprehensive Plan.)

For planning purposes, volume to capacity (V/C) ratios have been developed to represent LOS quantitatively. For concurrency and transportation planning purposes, roadways with a volume to capacity ratio greater than one are considered congested.

**Q: How are transportation projects funded?**

**A:** There are seven county-controlled funding sources for the transportation program: Ad Valorem Tax contributions; Six Cent Local Option Gas Tax; Constitutional Gas Tax; County Fuel Tax; Ninth Cent Gas Tax; Community Investment Tax; and Transportation Impact Fees. An eighth funding source - grants – may be available and is pursued for specific projects.

**Q: What is Hillsborough County's budget for transportation?**

**A:** Total transportation revenues across all funding sources from FY 2001 through FY 2025 are projected to be just under \$2.16 billion, or an annual average of \$86.3 million.

**Q: What are the county's projected uses for these funds?**

**A:** Projected uses include \$1.2 billion for operating and maintenance, \$140.0 million for road resurfacing, \$5 million for HARTline contributions, \$214.8 million for roadway capacity and safety improvements, \$101.9 million for intersection capacity and safety improvements, \$55.6 million for bridge capacity and safety improvements, \$43.0 million for roadside work (flattening sideslopes and removing obstacles), \$8 million for railroad crossings, \$62.2 million for sidewalks and ADA ramps, \$4.3 million for traffic calming, and \$298.2 million for other uses including debt service, transfers to municipalities, payments to developers, trails and reserves.

**Q: What are the priority county transportation projects?**

**A:** The Board of County Commissioners has identified that widening Bruce B. Downs Boulevard, Gunn Highway between South Mobley and Ehrlich Road, and Boyette Road as priority transportation projects.

Specifically, the FY 02 budget provides an added \$18.3 million in funding for these projects and the FY 03 budget provides an added \$6.0 million. This budget commits \$10 million of new revenue to Gunn Highway which will allow its completion, \$25.2 million to Bruce B. Downs Boulevard and \$5.6 million to Boyette Road which will allow a significant beginning on both of these projects.

**Q: Does Hillsborough County fund HARTline bus services?**

**A:** Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART or HARTline) has historically relied on county funding to maintain certain services. More recently, HARTline entered into a tri-party funding agreement to obtain additional funds from the City of Tampa, the Florida Department of Transportation, and the BOCC. The BOCC share of that additional funding was provided from a completed road project – Hoover Road. Since Tampa and FDOT do not plan to continue this general subsidy, we should not either. Given the strong ad valorem growth, it may not be necessary. In the County's 2002 and 2003 budget, the County will continue specific optional subsidies for Sunday service and circulator service. These commitments require \$535,000 in funding from gasoline taxes in both FY 02 and FY 03.



## Planning & Growth Management Department

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# Frequently Asked Questions

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## IMPACT FEES

**Q: Why does the County charge impact fees?**

**A:** Impact fees are a revenue source to the County that help defray the cost of infrastructure (roads, school sites, parks and fire stations) that are necessary to serve the needs of new development.

**Q: How is the impact fee determined?**

**A:** The amount of impact fees due on a particular project is determined by the amount and type of impact typically generated by the particular use of the property. For residential uses, the impact is measured by the type of dwelling unit (single family, mobile home, apartment) and the amount of trip's (traffic) generated by a home. The number of bedrooms in the home is used to anticipate the number of people creating an impact. For non-residential uses, impact fees are based on formulas which determine the average impact created by various uses. The transportation fee recognizes the typical number of vehicle trips and average by vehicle trip lengths by the use of the property. The fire formula analyzes the average number of people occupying a residence or a business and their demand on the fire network.

**Q: Can impact fees be waived?**

**A:** No, but they may be "relieved" by the Board of County Commissioners or under certain provisions detailed in the Impact Fee Ordinance. Hillsborough County currently has two (2) no fee zones which, under certain conditions, relieve the payment of transportation and right-of-way impact fees and water and sewer capacity fees. The Planning and Growth Management Department, at (813)272-5920, can provide maps of the two (2) no fee zones.

In addition, other County programs are available for affordable housing projects and new industries that bring jobs to Hillsborough County.

**Q: What does the County do with the money collected from impact fees?**

**A:** Impact fees are only used for new capital improvements or infrastructure that are identified by the Board of County Commissioners as being needed to accommodate new growth. Fees cannot be used to solve pre-existing problems or deficiencies, nor can they be used to operate any County facility. In addition, the type of impact fee collected can only be used for the same type of facility. For example, transportation fees can only be used to buy land for roads and to design and build new roadways, including related

construction such as bridges, storm water improvements or intersections. Further, the money collected can only be used in the area or zone in which it is collected. This ensures that the new improvements or capital facilities are placed in close proximity to the new growth that paid the impact fee. EXCEPTION: School impact fee monies can be used anywhere in Hillsborough County, including the City of Tampa, Temple Terrace and Plant City.

**Q: When is the impact fee due to Hillsborough County?**

**A:** Impact fees must be paid before the County can issue a Certificate of Occupancy (C.O.). Additionally, if a request for temporary electrical power is made prior to the issuance of the C.O., the impact fees must be paid prior to the power being activated.

**Q: Is there a time frame in which the County must spend the impact fee money collected?**

**A:** Yes. Generally, the County must spend impact fee money within six years of collection. This requirement ensures that the money serves the new development that generated the fee in the form of infrastructure or improvements.

**Q: What are impact fee offsets?**

**A:** Offsets, formerly referred to as credits, represent a recognition of improvements, including land, that developers or builders may make in lieu of the payment of impact fees. Offsets are tracked in dollar increments by the Development Services Division of the Planning and Growth Management Department, and are given upon acceptance by the Board of County Commissioners of the land or improvement deemed eligible.

**Q: How can I find out how much the impact fee will be for my project?**

**A:** This information can be provided by the Planning and Growth Management Department at (813) 272-5920.

**Q: Where can I obtain a copy of the Consolidated Impact Fee Ordinance?**

**A:** A copy of the Consolidated Impact Fee Ordinance may be obtained at the County Center, 601 E. Kennedy Blvd, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, or by contacting the Planning and Growth Management Department at (813)272-5920.

The cost of the ordinance is \$4.00 and there is an additional charge if it is to be mailed. A check or money order may be made payable to: Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners.

**Q: Where can I obtain impact fee calculation information for a residence or a business?**

**A:** You may contact Shawn Perrine, Impact Fee Manager, at (813) 276-8305 or you may contact the Planning and Growth Management Department at (813) 272-5920 to have the calculations figured for you. An impact fee calculation program will soon be available on our web page for your use.



## Planning & Growth Management Department

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# Frequently Asked Questions

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## ZONING

### General Zoning Information

Zoning counseling for properties within unincorporated Hillsborough County, and information and referrals to other divisions and departments for zoning related information is available through the Zoning Counseling Center.

When you contact the Zoning Counseling Center, please have available the [tax folio number](#) for the property, and a property survey if possible, for use by the counseling staff. Zoning Counselors are available on a walk-in basis, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the County Center, 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; by phone at (813) 307-4739, or via e-mail at [zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org)

To determine whether a piece of property is located in the city limits of [Tampa](#), [Temple Terrace](#) or [Plant City](#), or whether it is in unincorporated Hillsborough County, visit the [Property Appraiser's Office web site](#). There the property information can be found by using the tax folio number, street address or owner's name. The "Tax District" at the top of the property information page will identify which area the property is located in.

### **Q. What is zoning?**

**A..** Zoning regulates the way land is specifically used and developed. All land within unincorporated Hillsborough County is zoned into separate zoning districts. There are two kinds of zoning districts: 1) Standard (Euclidean) districts and 2) Planned Development (PD) districts. Each district specifies the uses allowed, the intensity or density permitted, the maximum building size, the setbacks, the building height as well as other development requirements. Zoning also provides the standards and regulations that help to implement the County's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan outlines the County's long-term goals and vision and is adopted by the Board of County Commissioners.

### [List of Zoning Districts](#)

### **Q. What is a Planned Development (PD) zoning district?**

**A.** A Planned Development (PD) is a site specific zoning district with its own requirements. Unlike standard zoning districts that apply the same development standards to all properties in the county with that designation, PDs are customized. Each PD district is controlled by a site plan with a site specific land use plan and development regulations.

Before an applicant can apply for a new PD zoning district, they must attend a mandatory Rezoning Pre-submittal Meeting with County staff to examine and discuss the proposed project. The meetings are by appointment only. There is no fee associated with the Rezoning Pre-submittal Meeting. To schedule a Rezoning Pre-submittal meeting, call the Zoning Counseling Center at (813) 307-4739.

[PD application form](#)

[Rezoning Pre-submittal Meeting application form](#)

**Q. What is the zoning of my property?**

A. Specific parcel by parcel zoning information is not available online. Contact the Zoning Counseling Center and be sure to have the [tax folio number](#) available for the property. Zoning Counselors are available on a walk-in basis at the County Center office, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, in person at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; by phone at (813) 307 - 4739 or via e-mail at [zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org).

**Q. What uses are allowed on my property?**

A. Please visit the provided link below to view Land Development Code Section 2.01.01 Table of Allowable Uses in Zoning Districts. This table provides a listing of all standard zoning districts along with a listing of various types of uses. Uses are shown to be either permitted (P), require a Conditional Use Permit (C), require a Special Use Permit (S), permitted as an accessory use (A), or prohibited (blank). Uses are categorized into Agricultural Uses, Residential Uses, Cultural/Institutional Uses, Neighborhood, General and High Intensity Business and Commercial Uses, Industrial, Manufacturing and Distribution Uses, Office and Professional Services Uses, Outdoor/Passive Uses, Neighborhood and General Public Service and Emergency Uses, Regional Cultural and Entertainment Facilities, and Solid Waste Facilities. If the zoning on the subject property is a Planned Development (PD), you will need to contact a Zoning Counselor to find what specific uses are permitted. Additionally, if you do not know the zoning of the property, please contact a zoning counselor and have the [tax folio number](#) available. Zoning Counselors are available on a walk-in basis at the County Center office, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, in person at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; by phone at (813) 307-4739 or via e-mail at [zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org).

[LDC, Section 2.02.02, Table of Allowable Uses](#)

[List of Zoning Districts](#)

**Q. What type of zoning district do I need to apply for to develop my property with commercial, residential, industrial, etc.?**

A. There are many factors that go into a decision on the appropriate zoning district. These include, but are not limited to, the location of the property, the Future Land Use category of the property, the proposed intensity (the size of the proposed buildings) if non-residential, the proposed density (the number of residential units per acre) if residential, the type of commercial (office, retail, etc.), and the type of residential (single-family,

multi-family, etc). To make an informed decision, it is strongly recommended that you seek zoning counseling from the zoning department. Rezoning Counselors are available on a walk-in basis at the County Center Office, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa. No appointment is necessary. Rezoning counseling cannot be conducted over the phone or via e-mail.

Based upon the factors discussed above, you may be advised to rezone your property to a standard zoning district, a restricted standard zoning district, or a Planned Development (PD) zoning district. A listing of standard zoning districts can be found in the Land Development Code Section 2.01.01 Table of Allowable Uses in Zoning Districts. Standard zoning districts have the same permitted uses and development standards for all properties with that zoning. Restricted standard zoning districts will have additional conditions that apply to the underlying standard zoning district's permitted uses and development standards. It is applicable only to that property. Planned Developments (PDs) are site specific with their own listing of permitted uses and their own development standards. Again, it is applicable only to the property, with each PD varying from other PDs.

[LDC, Section 2.02.02, Table of Allowable Uses](#)

**Q. What is density?**

**A.** Density is the number of residential units permitted per acre of land. It is determined by dividing the number of units by the total acreage. It should be noted that the total number of units achievable is also dependant on the amount of land that will be needed for infrastructure.

**Q. What is intensity/Floor Area/Floor Area Ratio (FAR)?**

**A.** Intensity is a measure of the degree to which land is developed based on density, use, mass, size, impact and traffic generation often expressed in terms of Floor Area Ratio (FAR).

Floor area is the sum of enclosed areas on all floors of a building or buildings measured from the outside faces of the exterior walls, including halls, lobbies, arcades, stairways, elevator shafts, and balconies, and any below-grade floor area used for access and storage. Not countable as floor area are covered parking structures, open terraces, open patios, open atriums, open balconies, covered patios, entry ways and breezeways.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is a non-residential land use intensity measurement similar to density. It compares the floor area of a building with the total area of the lot site.

**Q. What is a setback?**

**A.** A setback is the minimum amount of land that is required between a property line and building on a lot. It is expressed in linear feet. Properties have a front yard, rear yard and side yard setbacks. One should not assume that the roadway edge or sidewalk is where your property begins. To accurately determine where your property begins, a boundary survey is needed.

**Q. What are the setbacks on my property?**

- A.** Setback requirements by zoning district can be found in the Land Development Code Section 6.01.01 Schedule of Area, Height, Bulk and Placement Regulations. However, if the property is within a Planned Development (PD), you will need to contact a Zoning Counselor to find out what setback standards have been approved. PDs are site specific zoning districts – each with their own development standards. Please remember, it is best to view the boundary survey of your property to determine your property lines for accurate measurements. It cannot be assumed to be from the edge of the road or sidewalk. Contact the Zoning Counseling Center and be sure to have the [tax folio number](#) available for the property. Zoning Counselors are available on a walk-in basis at the County Center office, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; by phone at (813) 307 - 4739 or via e-mail at [zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org) .

[LDC, Section 6.01.01 Schedule of Area, Height, Bulk and Placement Regulations](#) (Development Standards Table)

**Q. I received a Code Enforcement citation regarding zoning regulations and the uses on my property. What to I do to correct the zoning problems?**

- A.** Determining what actions would be appropriate will require investigation by the Zoning Counselors. Required actions may include applying for variances to standard development requirements or applying to rezone the property. Contact the Zoning Counseling Center and be sure to have a property survey and the [tax folio number](#) available. Zoning Counselors are available on a walk-in basis at the County Center office, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; by phone at (813) 307-4739 or via e-mail at [zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org) .

**Q. What is the difference between rezoning my property and getting a variance on my property?**

- A.** Rezoning your property changes the way land can be used. For example, rezoning is required when a property owner has property that is currently zoned for residential uses, but wants to change the zoning district to one that allows office and commercial uses. Approved zoning changes run with the land, and transfers to any future owners of the land. Any buildings, roads, driveways, etc. that are currently on the property or are added to the property, must meet the development standards such as setbacks, building height, lot width, etc. for the new zoning district. If the development standards are not met, then the property owner may also need to seek a variance to the new zoning district's development standards. Variances that are approved also run with the land, and transfer to any future owners of the land.

Rezoning property includes appearing at a scheduled public hearing before a Zoning Hearing Master, who makes a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), and appearing at a scheduled BOCC Land Use Meeting before the BOCC for their final decision on the rezoning request (this may or may not include a public hearing). The rezoning process usually takes 3 - 6 months to complete, some requests may take longer.

Getting a variance to development standards includes appearing at a scheduled public hearing before a Land Use Hearing Officer who renders a final determination within 15 days of the public hearing date. The variance process usually takes 2 - 3 months to complete.

### [Rezoning and Variance Application Forms](#)

**Q. Can I have an accessory dwelling (“granny flat”) on my property?**

- A.** Accessory dwellings are permitted in all agricultural and residential zoning districts except AI, RSC-9, RDC-12 and RMC-20. A lot that meets the district’s minimum lot size and lot width is required. If the lot is legally nonconforming and doesn’t meet the district’s minimum lot size, it must be at least 7,000 square feet. The unit may be attached or detached. The primary dwelling must be owner-occupied and the accessory dwelling must be located on the same lot as the primary dwelling. Units may be above a garage when the primary structure is two or more stories and may meet accessory structure setbacks, rather than primary structure setbacks. Detached units are to meet the primary structure setbacks and do contribute to total lot coverage. Living space for an accessory dwelling is limited to 900 square feet. A variance to increase this square footage can be required provided the lot is at least 14,520 square feet and the living space of the accessory dwelling will not exceed 1,200 square feet or 25% of the living space of the primary dwelling, whichever is less. Living space includes all areas used for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, bathing, washing, sanitation, laundry and storage purposes. It does not include garages, attics or un-air conditioned spaces such as patios.

[LDC, Section 6.01.01 Schedule of Area, Height, Bulk and Placement Regulations](#) (Development Standards Table)

**Q. What is a Special Use Permit?**

- A.** Special Use permits allow an opportunity for property owners to use their land in ways that would not generally be allowed in the zoning district assigned to their property, but that have been found to promote the public health, safety and general welfare if certain controls are placed on them. The Special Use application process reviews the property owners request against certain applicable criteria.

Special Use Permits are not approved or denied administratively; rather, they are heard by a Zoning Hearing Master at a public hearing. Some examples of uses that would a Special Use Permit are paintball fields, land excavations, and private schools.

### [Special Use Application](#)

**Q. What is a Conditional Use Permit?**

- A.** A Conditional Use permit is designed to allow a specific use that is permitted if it is allowed in the current zoning district and also meets additional design requirements that help to ensure compatibility with adjacent uses and the surrounding neighborhood. Conditional Use Permits are reviewed administratively. No public hearing or public

notice is required. Examples of uses requiring a Conditional Use Permit are daycare centers, plant farms, boarding houses and cemeteries.

### Conditional Use Application

### Rezoning Properties

**Q. How do I change what use is permitted on my property?**

- A.** It is best to first confirm the zoning of your property and what uses are permitted in that district. If the new use is permitted, no action through our department is needed. If the new use requires a Conditional Use Permit or Special Use Permit, that permit will need to be approved before the new use can begin. If the use is not permitted, you will need to rezone the property. Contact the Zoning Counseling Center and be sure to have the [tax folio number](#) available for the property. Zoning Counselors are available on a walk-in basis at the County Center office, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; by phone at (813) 307 - 4739 or via e-mail at [zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org) .

### Application Forms

**Q. Should I seek counseling from staff before filing out an application to change the zoning on my property?**

- A.** A Rezoning Pre-submittal Meeting with zoning staff is required prior to submitting an application for a Planned Development (PD) zoning district. To schedule an appointment, please call (813) 307-4739.

### Rezoning Pre-submittal Meeting Application

A Rezoning Pre-submittal Meeting is not required for other zoning applications [standard zoning district, modification to an already approved Planned Development (PD), or administratively reviewed applications]. However, it is recommended that you meet with the Zoning Counseling staff to discuss zoning options and the zoning process. Rezoning counselors are available on a walk-in basis from 8:00 am – 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday, at the County Center office, 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa. Rezoning counseling is not available over the phone or via e-mail.

**Q. Can I rezone my property for commercial or office uses?**

- A.** First, the proposed zoning district of the property must be one that allows commercial uses. Next the property must be located in an area where the Comprehensive Plan supports non-residential uses.

For zoning district information contact the Zoning Counseling Center and be sure to have the [tax folio number](#) available for the property. [Tax folio numbers](#) are available online from the Property Appraiser's Office or by phone (813) 272 - 6100. Zoning Counselors are available on a walk-in basis at the County Center office, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; by phone at (813) 307 - 4739 or via e-mail at [zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org) .

For compliance with locational criteria information contact the [Planning Commission](#) and be sure to have the [tax folio number](#) available. The Planning Commission has a planner-on-call available on a walk-in basis at the County Center, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, in person at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 18<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; or by phone at (813) 272 – 5940.

**Q. How do I submit a Rezoning, Major Modification, Minor Modification (PRS), Special Use or Variance application?**

- A. Contact the Zoning Counseling Center to schedule an application in-take appointment by calling (813) 277-1630. Applications packets are online and include checklists that must be completed before submitting the applications.

[Zoning Applications](#)

**Q. What are the steps involved in the Rezoning, Major Modification and Special Use review process?**

- Zoning Counseling Session (optional)
- Schedule and attend Rezoning Pre-submittal Conference (mandatory for Planned Development Districts; voluntary for standard rezonings, major modifications, variances or special uses)
- Schedule an in-take appointment (813-277-1630) to submit an application (mandatory)
- Submit application (mandatory)
- Mail out notification letters to adjacent property owners (mandatory)
- Attend scheduled Zoning Hearing Master hearing (mandatory for applicant or their authorized agent/representative)
  - Special Use requests are determined by the Zoning Hearing Master (decision rendered within 15 working days after the hearing date)
  - All other applications receive recommendations by the Zoning Hearing Master that go before the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC); the final decision is made by the BOCC at the BOCC Land Use Meeting
- Submit site plans for Certification for Planned Development Districts and Major Modifications (only required for new PD zoning districts or requests to modify existing PD zoning districts)
- File for Oral Argument to speak before the BOCC at the Land Use meeting (Optional)
- Attend BOCC Land Use meeting (mandatory for applicant or their authorized agent/representative)
- Receive BOCC determination letter (the BOCC's determination is final and runs with the property, even if the ownership changes)
- NOTE: Rezoning applications approved for new development must then submit plans for Site and Subdivision Plans Review approval and apply for construction permits.

[Rezoning Applications](#)

[Rezoning Brochure](#)

[Zoning Hearing Master Schedule](#)

**Q. How long does it take to change the zoning on my property?**

- A. Generally, the rezoning process takes 3-6 months depending on the application type. A Standard Zoning District rezoning requires less time (3-4 months) than a Planned Development (PD) Zoning District (about 5-6 months).

[Zoning Hearing Master Schedule](#)

**Q. What does it cost to change the zoning on a piece of property?**

- A. Application fees are mandatory and vary by application type. Most application fees are provided on the Application Fee List. For additional information please contact a Zoning Counselor. Zoning Counselors are available on a walk-in basis at the County Center office, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; by phone at (813) 307 - 4739 or via e-mail at [zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org).

[Application Fee List](#)

**Q. Do I need to hire a professional planner and/or attorney in order to change the zoning?**

- A. There is no requirement that you hire a professional planner and/or attorney. A decision to hire a planner or attorney is an individual decision that depends on the particular circumstances of the applicant and the nature/complexity of the request. Individuals have changed the zoning on their property without assistance from a professional. Zoning Counseling staff cannot make any recommendations for private sector firms or consultants.

**Q. Can I draw my own planned development site plan? If not, who do I call to do my plans?**

- A. Plans used for a Planned Development (PD) rezoning request do not need to be signed and sealed by a licensed engineer. However, the plan does need to show all the required items listed on the application form and it must be drawn to scale.

Required Site Plan Information can be found in the Development Review Procedures Manual (DRPM), Section 6.2.1 Planned Development District Rezoning.

[Development Review Procedures Manual \(DRPM\)](#)

**[Zoning Public Hearing Processes](#)**

**Q. I received a Notice of Public Hearing in the mail. What does this mean?**

- A. If you have received a Notice of Public Hearing, then you are an adjacent property owner and/or neighborhood association contact person within a certain radius of an application scheduled for a public hearing. The notice provides you with the application

number, general request description and public hearing date, time and location. The hearing you are being notified about solicits public comment. You are not required to attend, however, if you have concerns that you want a hearing officer to be aware of and to be used in his/her decision making, then this notice provides you with the meeting date, time and location to address the hearing officer. If you are unable to attend a hearing, you can submit written comments at any time up until two working days before the scheduled hearing date. If you would like more information about the application and/or wish to provide written comments, please contact the PGM Neighborhood Liaison in person at the County Center office, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; by phone at (813) 276-2006 or via e-mail at [Hearings@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:Hearings@hillsboroughcounty.org) .

**Q. How can I find out what is being asked for in a rezoning application or a variance application?**

- A. Contact the PGM Neighborhood Liaison or visit the PGM STORE online to view documents related to a zoning application. Be sure to have available the application number or [tax folio number](#) for the subject property. The PGM Neighborhood Liaison is available to answer questions in person at the County Center office, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; by phone at (813) 276 – 2006 or via e-mail at: [Hearings@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:Hearings@hillsboroughcounty.org) .

**[PGM STORE](#)**

**Q. How do I submit my opposition or support to an application?**

- A. Submit letters of opposition or support to the Zoning Hearing Master via e-mail: [zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org) or send them to the following mailing address:  
Zoning Hearing Master  
Planning and Growth Management Department  
P. O. Box 1110, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Tampa, FL 33601

**Q. Do I need to be at the public hearing?**

- A. If you are representing yourself for your application that is going before the Land Use Hearing Officer, Zoning Hearing Master or Board of County Commissioners, yes, you as the applicant need to be present at the public hearing. You will need to be prepared to present your application and answer any questions. If you have hired a firm or consultant to handle your application and an affidavit to authorize agent has been filed with your application, then it is a personal choice as to whether you attend.

**[Zoning public hearing schedules](#)**

**Q. Can I contact the Zoning Hearing Master or the Land Use Hearing Officer?**

- A. No, a hearing officer cannot be contacted directly outside of a public hearing. Any comments or conversations with a hearing officer are to occur at an application's public

hearing. To speak with a hearing officer outside a public hearing is prohibited by Florida law.

**Q. What is “Oral Argument” and how do I file for Oral Argument?**

**A.** “Oral Argument” consists of the opportunity to speak before the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) during one of their scheduled meetings. At the BOCC Land Use Meetings, only those people who are a “Party of Record” of a Land Use Hearing Officer’s hearing may file for Oral Argument. Anyone who is a Party of Record, and wishes to speak before the Board at the BOCC Land Use Meetings, must file a “Request for Oral Argument” form (included in the “Party of Record Information Packet”) with the BOCC Clerk’s Office within 10 calendar days after the date of the filing of the Land Use Hearing Officer’s recommendation. A copy of the request shall be maintained by the Administrator in a Master File available to the public and the Board of County Commissioners.

Oral argument requests must include a detailed statement that clearly states the reason(s) why the BOCC should approve the request for oral argument, and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- To submit oral argument to resolve ambiguities in the record of the Land Use Hearing Officer public hearing,
- To submit oral argument concerning an additional evidence request,
- To submit oral argument concerning a mistake in the Land Use Hearing Officer’s recommendation, or
- To submit oral argument concerning a matter introduced in the record of the Land use Hearing Officer hearing that was not addressed in the recommendation.

The content of testimony during oral argument shall be the same as the content of testimony submitted verbally or in writing to the Land use Hearing Officer (no new information is allowed).

The Clerk’s Office is located at the County Center, 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa. The Clerk’s Office staff may be reached by phone at (813) 276-8100, ext. 4567.

[Party of Record Information Packet](#) (Includes Request for Oral Argument form)

**Q. Okay, I’ve gotten my zoning request approved, now what do I do?**

**A.** The next step after getting your zoning request approved is the Site Development Review process which is then followed by the Construction Permitting process. Both processes are reviewed by County staff and do not require public hearings.

The Site Development Review process reviews development plans for compliance with a variety of regulatory requirements. Approval of the plans is required before obtaining building permits. For more information, contact the Site Development Review staff, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, in person at the County Center, 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 19<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; by phone at (813) 272 – 5920, or visit the [Site and Subdivision web site](#).

## Variances for Properties

### **Q. What is a variance?**

- A.** A variance is a deviation from a Land Development Code requirement, such as a reduced building setback or increase in building height. Variances are based upon six hardship factors, and cannot be the result of an illegal action or self imposed hardship. Variances are reviewed and decided by a Land Use Hearing Officer (LUHO) after conducting a public hearing. Variances cannot be requested for land use, floor area ratio or required review processes.

### [Variance application](#)

### **Q. What is the variance process?**

- A.** The process begins with the submittal of a completed application by the applicant. It is then scheduled for a public hearing and the applicant is required to send out written notification letters to a specified radius of property owners and neighborhood associations. The subject property is also posted with a sign advertising the hearing date and time. A hearing is conducted with an opportunity for the applicant to explain their case and an opportunity for public input (in support or in opposition). A decision is rendered in writing fifteen days after the hearing. The process from start to finish takes approximately two months.

### [Variance Brochure](#)

### **Q. What are the steps involved in the Variance review process?**

- Zoning Counseling Session (optional)
- Schedule an in-take appointment (call 813-277-1630) to submit application (mandatory)
- Submit application (mandatory)
- Mail out notification letters to adjacent property owners (mandatory)
- Attend scheduled Land Use Hearing Officer hearing (mandatory)
- Receive Land Use Hearing Officer's decision 15 days after the hearing

### [Variance application](#)

### [Variance Brochure](#)

### **Q. How do I submit a Variance application?**

- A.** Contact the Zoning Counseling Center to schedule an application in-take appointment by calling (813) 277-1630. Application packets are online and include checklists that must be completed before submitting the applications:

### [Variance application](#)

### [Variance Brochure](#)

**Q. How long is the process for a Variance? Why does it take so long?**

- A. The process from start to finish for Variance applications going before a Land Use Hearing Officer usually takes from 2 - 3 months.

The processing and review of an application requires many steps – internal and external to the PGM department. Timelines have been established to provide transmittal time to staff, to provide review time to staff, to provide review and comment time to non-zoning departments and agencies, to provide time for the applicant to send out hearing notifications, to post the property with signage and publish a legal advertisement, to conduct site visits, to provide time for possible neighborhood meetings, and to coordinate all applications for a single hearing date. Some hearings may have more than 30 applications at a single hearing. The hearing schedules are drafted the year before and approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

[Land Use Hearing Officer Hearing Schedule](#)

**Zoning Resources**

**Q. What is the Land Development Code?**

- A. [The Land Development Code](#) (LDC) is a compilation of standards, regulations and procedures for the review and approval of all proposed development in unincorporated Hillsborough County. It is adopted by the Board of County Commissioners to promote and preserve the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens and to aid in harmonious and orderly development within the County.

**Q. Where can I get a copy of the Land Development Code?**

- A. Copies of the [Land Development Code](#) (LDC) are available in paper form and online. To request a paper copy with a binder, please contact the Zoning Records Clerk, Monday through Friday, in person at the County Center, 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; by phone (813) 272-5920 or via e-mail at [zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org).

[The LDC is available for online viewing at Municode.com](#)

**Q. What is the Development Review Procedures Manual?**

- A. [The Development Review Procedures Manual](#) (DRPM) includes information on application submittal requirements and review procedures for each review process occurring with the Planning and Growth Management Department.

**Q. Where can I get a copy of the Development Review Procedures Manual?**

- A. Copies of the [Development Review Procedures Manual](#) (DRPM) are available in paper form and online. To request a paper copy with a binder, contact the Zoning Records Clerk, Monday through Friday, in person at the County Center, 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; by phone (813) 272-5920 or via e-mail at [zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org).

[The DRPM is available for viewing online at Municode.com](#)

**Q. Where can I find zoning applications online? Can they be submitted online?**

**A.** Zoning applications are available online as PDF files that can be printed or downloaded to personal computers. The applications cannot be submitted online nor can they be submitted in an electronic format. The application packets include checklists that must be completed before the packets can be submitted. All zoning applications must be submitted as packets of paper documents. A scheduled appointment is required for submitting a zoning application. Contact the Zoning Counseling Center to schedule an application in-take appointment by calling (813) 277-1630.

[Online zoning application forms](#)

**Q. How do I get to the PGM Store to view status and documents for applications scheduled for public hearings?**

**A.** Click on the following internet address and follow the online instructions:  
<http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/pgm/resources/onlineservices/pgmstore/>

**Q. Are zoning codes the same as building codes?**

**A.** No, the Land Development Code (also referred to as the zoning code) is applicable to all property within unincorporated Hillsborough County and is focused on regulating the way land is used and developments are designed. It is adopted by the Board of County Commissioners.

The Florida Building Code is focused on standardized construction requirements for all builders and all construction projects on all properties in the state of Florida. The Florida Building Code is a Department of Community Affairs document.

[Hillsborough County Land Development Code](#)

[Florida Building Code](#)

## **Other Zoning Information and Related Topics**

### **Q. How can I get an official written zoning verification letter?**

- A.** An official written zoning verification letter provides confirmation of the current zoning district for a parcel of land. Such letters can be obtained by submitting a request in writing along with a check payable to “BOCC”. A fee is required for each written zoning verification request (see link below to the zoning application fee list). In your request please include the property’s [tax folio number](#). Verifications cannot be completed without a tax folio number. Staff is provided with a 30 working day review period. Actual response time may vary, but will not exceed 30 working days. All applications are processed in the order in which they are received.

Contact the Zoning Counseling Center if you have additional questions. The Zoning Counselors are available on a walk-in basis, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the County Center, 601 E. Kennedy Blvd., 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; by phone at (813) 307-4739 or via e-mail at [zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org).

Please mail requests to:  
Planning and Growth Management  
Attn: Written Zoning OR Verification  
P.O. Box 1110  
Tampa, FL 33601-1110.

Please hand deliver requests to:  
Planning and Growth Management  
Attn: Written Zoning Verification  
601 E. Kennedy Blvd., 20<sup>th</sup> floor  
Tampa, FL 33602

### **[Application Fee List](#)**

### **Q. May I have a home-based business?**

- A.** Home-based businesses, or home occupations, are permitted in residential zoning districts. They are limited to low intensity types of businesses, such as a home office or private tutoring. The types not permitted are auto repair, physician’s offices, kennels or animal hospital uses. Home occupations are limited to members of the immediate family residing on the premises, cannot use more than 25% of the floor area of the home, cannot be operated in an accessory structure, cannot generate excessive traffic, cannot change the outside appearance of the home (including signage limitations), and cannot create noise, fumes or odors. Contact the Zoning Counseling Center and be sure to have the [tax folio number](#) available for the property. Zoning Counselors are available on a walk-in basis at the County Center office, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown

Tampa, by phone at (813) 307 - 4739 or via e-mail at [zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org) .

**Q. Can I operate a daycare in my home?**

- A. This will depend on the number of children being cared for. “Family child care” is permitted without any zoning approval. Family child care can be operated for profit or not and is limited to the following: 1) a maximum of eight children from birth to 24 months; or 2) a maximum of 12 children under 13 years of age, provide no more than four are under 24 months of age. These groups include any children under the age of 13 that are related to the caregiver and provided with care in the home. The home must be owner-occupied. If the numbers and ages mentioned in these groups are exceeded, the use is categorized as “child care.”

Please see LDC Section 2.02.02 (Table of Allowable Uses) to see what districts permit child care by right or require additional approval. In all instances, family child care or child care, licensing through the State is required.

[LDC, Section 2.02.02, Table of Allowable Uses](#)

**Q. Is my property “grandfathered-in”?**

- A. “Grandfathering” is not a term used in the Hillsborough County Land Development Code. However, generally speaking, “grandfathering” usually refers to something being allowed to continue to exist based upon previously existing circumstances. Property owners who believe their property has been “grandfathered-in” need to investigate whether they have a legal nonconformity on their property. See “What is a legal nonconformity” below.

**Q. What is a legal nonconformity?**

- A. A legal nonconformity is a use, lot, characteristic or density that was permitted at ~~one time~~ in the past, but is not permitted anymore. If something is determined to be legally nonconforming, then it has been determined to have existed before a change was made that prohibited it. Legal nonconformities are tolerated by the LDC, but are not encouraged. If changes are made to a property that has a legal non-conformity, it may have to be brought into compliance with the LDC requirements.

Properties that have nonconformities that have not been determined to be legal, may not receive approval for county permits until the property has been brought into compliance.

Determinations of Nonconformities are conducted as administrative reviews. Staff is provided with a 30 working day review period. Actual response time may vary, but will not exceed 30 working days. All applications are processed in the order in which they are received.

To find out more information please contact the Zoning Counseling Center and be sure to have the [tax folio number](#) available for the property. Zoning Counselors are available on a walk-in basis at the County Center office, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; by phone at (813) 307 - 4739 or via e-mail at [zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org) .

To schedule an appointment to submit a Determination of Nonconformity application contact the Zoning Counseling Center by calling (813) 277-1630. Application packets include checklists that must be completed before submitting the applications:

#### [Determination of Nonconformity Application](#)

**Q. Can I split my property?**

**A.** The ability to subdivide property is based upon many factors – including the zoning, road classification, service area and possible presence of wetlands. Contact the Zoning Counseling Center and be sure to have the [tax folio number](#), and property survey if available, for the property. Zoning Counselors are available on a walk-in basis at the County Center office, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa, by phone at (813) 307 - 4739 or via e-mail at [zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org) .

**Q. What is a Future Land Use category?**

**A.** A Future Land Use Category is a classification used to designate, geographically on a map and/or verbally in text form, which activities are permitted within the specified area. Future Land Use categories are part of the comprehensive plan for Hillsborough County. These categories are focused on long range planning that identifies the areas of the county where development will be encouraged at higher densities/intensities and where funding will be directed for infrastructure such as roads, water and sewer service.

The zoning district on a parcel of land in unincorporated Hillsborough County must comply with the underlying Future Land Use category also assigned to that parcel.

#### [Planning Commission Land Use Information System](#) (LUIS)

**Q. How do I find out my property tax folio number?**

**A.** Contact the Hillsborough County Property Appraiser's Office, Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., in person at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; by phone at (813) 272-6100 (choose option for customer service), or [online](#). The property's street address or owner's name will be required.

**Q. How do I get the most recently recorded deed for my property?**

- A.** Contact the Clerk of the Circuit Court's Records Library, Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., in person at the Records Library, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Room 140, County Courthouse, 419 Pierce Street, Room 140, in downtown Tampa; by phone at (813) 276-8100, ext. 4367; or online at <http://pubrec3.hillsclerk.com/oncore/Search.aspx>
- Q.** **I would like to build a shed or detached garage on my property. Does the County regulate this?**
- A.** Yes, sheds and detached garages require a building permit from the PGM Building Services Division. Placement of the shed or detached garage is as follows:
- If the structure is over 15' in height, the structure follows the primary structure setbacks.
  - If the structure is 15' in height or lower:
    - i. Placement to be at least 50' from the front yard and not within any required side yard.
    - ii. If within the required side yard, structure to be behind the primary dwelling and no closer than three feet to the side and rear property lines.
    - iii. If within the required rear yard, structure may not occupy more than 20% of the required rear yard and no closer than three feet to the side and rear property lines.
    - iv. If the property is on a corner lot, the structure may be located 10' into the front yard that functions as a side yard.
- Q.** **Where can I build a fence on my property?**
- A.** Fences are permitted within your property. The maximum height for a fence in the front yard is four feet. Within side and rear yards, the maximum height is six feet. Exceptions are permitted for "corner" and "through" lots. Contact the Zoning Counseling Center and be sure to have the [tax folio number](#) available for the property. Zoning Counselors are available on a walk-in basis at the County Center office, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; by phone at (813) 307 - 4739 or via e-mail at [zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org) .
- Q.** **Where can I find a copy of building plans or site development plans?**
- A.** For information on copies of building plans, please contact the Building Services Division at (813) 272 - 5600. For information on copies of site development plans, please contact the Land Development and Transportation Services Division at (813) 272 - 5920. Building plans are for projects that have already been through and been approved for site development, or do not require site development review and approval. Site development plans are those that are reviewed by numerous county departments before a project proceeds to obtain a building permit.
- Q.** **How do I register a complaint about a nuisance property?**

**A.** Contact the Code Enforcement Department at (813) 274-6600. This department is responsible for enforcement of the Zoning Code, Signs, Adult Use and Minimum Housing Standards Ordinances and for the condemnation/demolition of unsafe structures.

**Q. How do I find out if there are EPC jurisdictional areas on my property? (i.e., wetlands, conservation areas, etc.)**

**A.** Contact the EPC Wetlands Assessment Division and be sure to have your [tax folio number](#) available. EPC staff may be reached in person at the EPC Wetlands Assessment Division, Roger P. Stewart Center, 3629 Queen Palm Drive, (Sabal Park), Tampa; by phone at (813) 627 - 2600 (ask for the Wetlands Assessment staff), or via e-mail at [epcinfo@epchc.org](mailto:epcinfo@epchc.org)

**Q. Are there water and sewer services available to my property?**

**A.** To determine the availability of water and sewer services to a certain location within unincorporated Hillsborough County, contact the Engineering Review Unit of the PGM Land Development section; be sure to have your [tax folio number](#) available. County staff may be reached in person at the Land Development Section offices of PGM, 19<sup>th</sup> Floor, County Center, 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, in downtown Tampa; or by phone at (813) 276 – 8397.

**Q. Can I have commercial uses on my property if it is served by a well and a septic system?**

**A.** If the current zoning district of the property allows commercial uses, then the type and intensity of commercial use must be evaluated to determine the feasibility of having the commercial use on a well and septic system.

For zoning district and land use information:

Contact the Zoning Counseling Center and be sure to have the [tax folio number](#) available for the property. Zoning Counselors are available on a walk-in basis at the County Center office, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, at 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, in downtown Tampa; by phone at (813) 307 - 4739 or via e-mail at [zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:zoninginfo@hillsboroughcounty.org) .

For well and septic information:

Contact the Land Development Review Division of PGM; be sure to have your [folio number](#) available. County staff may be reached in person at the Land Development Section offices of PGM, 19<sup>th</sup> Floor, County Center, 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, in downtown Tampa; or by phone at (813) 272 – 5920.

**Q. How do I find the requirements for a new well and septic system?**

**A.** Contact the Hillsborough County Health Department and be sure to have the [tax folio number](#) and street address for the property available. Health Department staff may be reached in person at the Hillsborough County Health Department, 1105 E. Kennedy Boulevard (at Nebraska Avenue) in downtown Tampa; by

phone at (813) 307 – 8000 or online at  
[http://www.hillscountyhealth.org/env\\_health/septic.htm](http://www.hillscountyhealth.org/env_health/septic.htm) .

- Q. How do I vacate an easement or right-of-way?**
- A.** Contact the Hillsborough County Real Estate Department and be sure to have your [tax folio number](#) available. County staff may be reached in person at the Hillsborough County Real Estate Department, 21<sup>st</sup> Floor, County Center, 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, in downtown Tampa or by phone at (813) 272 - 5810.