



**ROCK HILL**  
SOUTH CAROLINA

*Always on.*



# Open For Business

**A Program to Provide Personal Assistance to  
Small Business in Choosing, Building or Expanding  
their Business Location**

[www.cityofrockhill.com/openforbusiness](http://www.cityofrockhill.com/openforbusiness)



CITY OF ROCK HILL PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT



### AN IMPORTANT NOTE:

We **strongly advise** before leasing, purchasing or otherwise committing to a property, you confirm that the zoning and physical layout of the building and site are appropriate for the use intended. This includes having a clear understanding of any Code restrictions or limitations that may affect your operation, and any building and site modifications that may be necessary to open for business.

### HELPING YOU GET OPEN FOR BUSINESS

We know that running a small business is a daunting task, and starting a small business can be even more intimidating. To encourage and assist you in seeing your business plan become a reality, the City has created the **Open for Business** program, which includes a special business assistance team ready to roll up their sleeves and guide you through the process of opening, relocating or expanding your business in Rock Hill.

We're sure government requirements, rules and regulations may sometimes overwhelm and discourage business people, but we hope the information provided through this program will get you started on the right foot in your new venture. We encourage you to call for an appointment with one of our team members, and we look forward to working personally with you on your project.

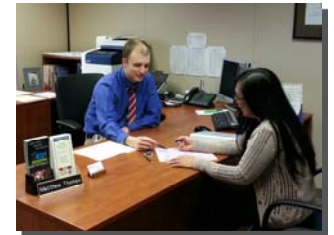
### PREPARING FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT

In preparation for your appointment, we ask that you complete the Zoning and Building Compliance form (located at the back of this brochure) answering as many questions as

you can. The realtor or leasing agent for your potential location should be able to provide most of the information required about your proposed business location. Of course you are the expert on your business itself and the details of its operation. We will help you complete any information that you don't have or that you are not sure about. Having as much information as possible about your type of business as well as the building and site you are considering helps us to make sure the information and guidance we give you is accurate and applicable to your particular business.

### MEETING WITH THE OPEN FOR BUSINESS STAFF

Bring your completed Zoning and Building Compliance form answering as many questions as you can. Again, we will help you complete any infor-



mation that you don't have or that you are not sure about. At this initial meeting, we should be able to determine whether the property is properly zoned for your use, and whether there are any major issues in meeting basic requirements that might preclude moving forward.

### CITY PERFORMS FEASIBILITY INSPECTION

After we meet to discuss and complete your questionnaire, we will make a "feasibility inspection" of your proposed site. This inspection is not intended as a construction inspection and in no way certifies the overall soundness or suitability of the building, structure, site or other elements. The feasibility inspection will be made to give you an idea

**Please call to schedule your personal appointment and a free assessment of your proposed business location.**  
**(803) 329-5590**  
**Open for Business is a program of the Planning & Development Department located on the 3rd floor of the East Wing of City Hall, 155 Johnston Street, Rock Hill, SC 29730.**

of any improvements or modifications that may be required to meet City codes, so you can determine anticipated costs and expenses to finalize your budget and plans. If you are considering purchasing a building, we would recommend securing the services of a certified and licensed inspection agency as well.



The feasibility inspection covers the site (parking, landscaping, dumpster, etc.) and the building to see what changes, if any, will be required for compliance with City and State codes. There are basically two scenarios with differing requirements:

### 1. Change of Tenant with the same type of business

If you are occupying or relocating to a building or space that was previously occupied within the past 6 months by the same type business as yours, there are generally no changes required to the building or site unless the building has been damaged or altered without permits. There may be some exceptions to that rule when there is a serious or life safety code violation, or certain maintenance needs to be performed such as replacing dead landscaping, patching potholes or striping parking spaces.

### 2. Change of the Type of Use in a Commercial Building or Changing a Building to Commercial from another Category (for example: changing a residence to an office)

Change of use almost always requires compliance with current codes which in turn usually requires changes to the building and site.

Some of the things that may be required are:

#### Site Changes:

- additional parking
- handicap parking and signage
- paving parking lot
- widening driveway/access
- provision/screening of dumpster pad

- stormwater/drainage improvements
- additional landscaping
- sign location

#### Building Changes:

- handicap access
- additional restrooms
- handicap accessible facilities
- exit lights
- emergency lighting
- electrical changes and estimate of electrical usage

## INSPECTION RESULTS

After the inspection, you will receive a copy of the Feasibility Inspection Report along with appropriate checklists to help you prepare plans



for any necessary construction. We will explain any required changes and the next steps in your process.

## PREPARING CONSTRUCTION PLANS FOR SUBMITTAL

If the inspection shows that significant changes or improvements are required, your next step would be to prepare the site and/or building



plans. You should use the Feasibility Inspection Report and the checklists provided to prepare complete plans for your specific project. If using a design professional, provide them with a copy of these forms. Some plans are required to be prepared by a South Carolina registered architect and/or engineer, and we will advise you if that is the case.

## SUBMITTING PLANS FOR APPROVAL

When your plans are complete, submit the site and building plans to the **Open for Business** staff. The plans will be reviewed within 5 to 10 business days. You and your design professional will be notified if the plans are approved or if the plans require revision, you will be provided a detailed list of review comments. While our goal is to provide

enough information so that the plans can be approved upon first submittal, most plans go through one or two revisions.

### SELECTING THE RIGHT LICENSED CONTRACTOR

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If you have not already done so, when your plans have been approved you will want to begin your contractor selection. Having an approved set of plans to put out for bids or estimates is helpful in avoiding costly surprises and unexpected expenditures. It also gives your contractor a more complete picture of the work necessary, which generally means a more accurate estimate and better pricing.

### YOUR CONTRACTOR OBTAINS THE PERMITS AND CALLS FOR INSPECTIONS

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Permits can only be obtained by an appropriately licensed South Carolina general contractor who must also hold a current City business license. The general contractor must also provide a list of any subcontractors that he plans to use, who must also be appropriately licensed. We will provide your contractor with an approved set of your plans to use as his field copy. These plans must be kept at the job site until the project has been completed.



The general contractor must call for the required inspections of the work as it progresses. This is to avoid premature requests by others resulting in re-inspection fees.

### DON'T FORGET YOUR SIGNS

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An important part of any business is its signs. Signs are issued their own separate permits and are usually handled by a dedicated sign contractor, that can often help you design the most effective signs as well as manufacture and install them. Most area sign contractors are familiar with the Rock Hill sign regulations, as well as the process of secur-



ing the permits for your signs.

### CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY AND ZONING COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATE ARE ISSUED

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When all your building and site improvements are complete, the general contractor will then call for the final inspection to secure the Certificate of Occupancy for you to be able to move in. This inspection includes the building and site work. When everything is inspected and approved, you will be issued a Certificate of Occupancy and a Zoning Compliance Certificate. The [Commercial Certificate of Occupancy Brochure](#) will explain all of the things that must be ready for your final inspection.

### GET YOUR BUSINESS LICENSE

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Once you have obtained your Certificate of Occupancy and your Zoning Compliance Form has been approved, you can secure your business license. The business license fee is based on your type of business using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) and your estimate of gross receipts for the coming year. The business license fee for following years will be based on your actual gross receipts from the previous year. A calculator is available online at [www.cityofrockhill.com](http://www.cityofrockhill.com). You may also contact us to help determine your license fee at (803) 329-5590.

### SET-UP UTILITIES AND SANITATION SERVICE

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During construction, the utilities are sometimes in the owner's or contractor's name and utility costs are paid by them. But after you have obtained your Certificate of Occupancy and you are ready to move in, the utilities must be transferred to your new business.

In addition, Rock Hill provides a range of commercial sanitation options, including commercial recycling programs as well as conventional trash pickup.



To have the utilities transferred to your company or name, you will need to sign a Commercial Service Agreement and pay a deposit. For more information and exact fees, contact us at (803) 329-5590.

## OPEN FOR BUSINESS

### **Congratulations.....you're ready for the Grand Opening!**

Be sure to visit our webpage to find out about the marketing opportunities provided for businesses as part of the sign regulations and other allowable outdoor advertising mechanisms such as Grand Opening permits and Temporary Sign permits.

### **Other things to take care of while your location is being finalized.**

There are several other agencies that you may need to contact before you are ready to open, depending on the type of business you have, such as:

#### **SC Department of Revenue**

454 S. Anderson Road  
Suite 202  
Rock Hill SC 29731  
803-324-7641  
[www.sctax.org](http://www.sctax.org)



All new businesses will need to register with the DOR, which administers the majority of taxes and licenses businesses will need to operate in South Carolina. You can use the **South Carolina Business One Stop** ([www.scbos.sc.gov](http://www.scbos.sc.gov)) to help determine the other types of licenses or registrations your business might need., such as **sales tax licenses**, **alcoholic beverage licenses** and **amusement and admission licenses**.

#### **York County Environmental Health Office SC Dept. of Health and Environmental Control**

1070 Heckle Boulevard  
Rock Hill SC 29732  
803-909-7300



Restaurants and other food service businesses will need to contact the County Health Department to get the appropriate **Food Service Permits**.

#### **SC Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation**

110 Centerview Drive  
Columbia SC 29210  
803-896-4300  
[www.llr.state.sc.us](http://www.llr.state.sc.us)



LLR administers the licensing of over 130 **regulated professions and occupations**, including such diverse groups as contractors, cosmetologists, funeral directors and a wide range of medical providers. Most people are generally aware if their profession is regulated. The LLR website is also a good way to check on the license status of contractors and other professionals you might be considering for hire.

#### **SC Secretary of State**

1205 Pendleton Street  
Suite 525  
Columbia SC 29201  
803-734-2158  
[www.scsos.com](http://www.scsos.com)



Corporations, limited liability companies and limited partnerships must complete their **business filings** with the Secretary of State's office. This can be done directly with the SCSOS office, or through the **South Carolina Business One Stop** ([www.scbos.sc.gov](http://www.scbos.sc.gov)).

#### **SC Department of Social Services**

2638 Two Notch Rd., Suite 220  
Columbia, SC 29204  
888-202-1469 (toll free) or  
803-898-9001  
[www.dss.sc.gov](http://www.dss.sc.gov)



DSS provides **child care registration and licensing** for all child care businesses, including those operating out of a home.

## OTHER RESOURCES

#### **U.S. Small Business Administration**

Programs and services to help you start and grow your business.  
[www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

#### **Internal Revenue Service**

Tax information and Federal tax id numbers.  
[www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

## SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCES



Winthrop Regional Small Business  
Development Center  
118 Thurmond Building  
Rock Hill, SC 29733  
(803) 323-2283  
[www.winthropregionalsbdc.org](http://www.winthropregionalsbdc.org)

The Winthrop Regional Small Business Development Center offers both training programs and one-on-one counseling that provide management and technical assistance to both start-up businesses as well as established enterprises.



York County Regional Chamber of  
Commerce  
116 E. Main St.  
Rock Hill, SC 29731  
(803) 324-7500  
[www.yorkcountychamber.com](http://www.yorkcountychamber.com)

The Chamber of Commerce is an association of business people concerned about improving the area in which they do business and the area in which they have made the greatest investment. The Chamber has a Small Business Council and often provides information and training that is aimed at small business.



York Technical College  
452 S. Anderson Road  
Rock Hill, SC 29730  
(803) 327-8000  
(803) 981-7314 (Entrepreneur Network)  
[www.yorktech.edu](http://www.yorktech.edu)

York Tech has both credit and continuing education courses that help develop and enhance small business skills. In addition, they host the Entrepreneur Network to assist, inform and encourage local small business owners, entrepreneurs, and potential entrepreneurs to network, share experiences with others, and engage in valuable educational opportunities.



The Hive U (RevenFlo Office)  
125 Caldwell St.  
Rock Hill, SC 29730  
(803) 328-6033

<http://oldtownnewworld.com/the-hive-in-rock-hill/>

The Hive is a workforce development / small business incubation program with an industry focus on Internet Marketing, Communications, and Technology. The Hive provides Web Design and Development and Internet Marketing services to non-profit and public sector organizations under professional management of RevenFlo including CMS Websites, Mobile Applications, and Web Marketing. The Hive is a collaborative partnership between York Technical College, Winthrop University, Comporium Communications, City of Rock Hill, Becca and Harry Dalton, RevenFlo, and the students who choose to and are qualified to participate. The clients of the program are also collaborative participants. The Hive is located in Old Town Rock Hill, SC, on the third floor of the Citizen's Building at 157 E. Main St.

The Hive Business Center  
(803) 981-7397

HiveBusinessCenter@yorktech.edu  
<http://knowledgeparkrockhill.com/programs/the-hive/>

The Hive Business Center (HBC) provides services to start-ups and small businesses. The HBC is run by York Technical College students to provide administrative services such as development of marketing materials, data entry, database development, small local area network setup, accounting system set-up, etc. Basically, the HBC exists to help small businesses grow. It also serves a dual purpose in giving York Technical College students an opportunity to use their skills in real world activities. Students work under the supervision of faculty.



City of Rock Economic Development  
Contact: David Warner (803) 329-7090  
David.Warner@cityofrockhill.com  
<http://tirockhill.org/>

The technology incubator program assists in the start-up and launching of selected technology-based businesses. The program provides hands-on consulting support, resource identification, educational and technical assistance to improve an entrepreneur's prospects for success and create new knowledge worker jobs.



Contact: David Warner  
City of Rock Economic Development  
(803) 329-7090  
dwarner@cityofrockhill.com

Co-Work (Coming Soon)

Shared office space for small businesses complete with many of the resources you need such as a desk, high-speed internet, and an Old Town address.

**Planning and Development Department - Permit Application Center**

P.O. Box 11706 or 155 Johnston St., Rock Hill, SC 29731-1706

Ph: 803-329-5590 Fax: 803-329-7228

Email: [openforbusiness@cityofrockhill.com](mailto:openforbusiness@cityofrockhill.com) Website: [www.cityofrockhill.com](http://www.cityofrockhill.com)



**ZONING AND BUILDING CODE COMPLIANCE APPLICATION**

(USE WHEN STARTING OR CHANGING A BUSINESS LOCATED IN THE CITY)

*Form must be completed by someone legally authorized to speak on the business' behalf (business owner/manager).*

Legal Name of Business: \_\_\_\_\_ Doing Business As: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Bus. owner/manager name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Owner/Landlord: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date this location is planned to open: \_\_\_\_\_ Expected # of Jobs Created: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe your proposed business (professional office, auto body shop, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

What are the business' proposed activities at this location? \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Hours of Operation: \_\_\_\_\_

Square Footage of this Space: \_\_\_\_\_ How many restrooms are available? \_\_\_\_\_ How many are handicap accessible? \_\_\_\_\_

How many parking spaces are available for your space? \_\_\_\_\_ How many are handicap accessible? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you planning to make any interior or exterior changes to this space like adding or removing a wall or changing the seating configuration? List changes: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you planning to make any outside changes like outdoor storage or installing a fence? List changes: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you proposing to sell alcohol? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No Are you proposing to serve alcohol? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If you are one of the following uses, have you completed a Management of Impacts' Plan (form attached)? Bar/nightclub, teen club, event venue, restaurant that serves alcohol and is open after midnight, or craft brewery \_\_\_\_\_

If proposed business/profession is regulated by the State, have you obtained your state license? \_\_\_\_\_ Attach a copy.

Are you proposing to wash vehicles at this location? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ . *If Yes, a [NPDES General Permit for Vehicle Wash Water Discharges](#) is required by SCDHEC. You must present the permit before you can obtain your business license.*

By signing below, the business owner/manager certifies that the information on this application is true and correct. If any information is false or misleading, zoning approval shall be considered void. Business owner/manager also attests that there are no recorded deed restrictions or restrictive covenants that apply to this property which are contrary to, conflict with, or prohibit the permitted activity being requested.

Business Owner/Manager Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**For Office Use Only**

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Fee Due:  Low-Impact \$35  High-Impact \$50  N/A

Inspections Required:  Zoning  Building  Fire  Industrial Pre-Treatment

Permit No. \_\_\_\_\_

Zoning District: \_\_\_\_\_ Use Category: \_\_\_\_\_  Permitted  Conditional Use  Special Excep.  Prohibited

Previous Use Category: \_\_\_\_\_

Building Occupancy Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Previous Occupancy Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional forms attached:  Management of Impacts Plan  SC State License  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Other processes needed prior to approval of application:  Zoning Board of Appeals Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Planning & Development Director/Designee:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Approval Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Form is not valid without signature.

## Open for Business Checklist

- 1. **Complete the Zoning and Building Compliance form.** This form gives us information about your proposed business location. Answer as many questions as you can, we'll help you with the rest.
- 2. **Bring your completed form in the Planning and Development Department.** You can schedule an appointment or just come by. A representative will review your proposed location and discuss any zoning or building code regulations with you.
- 3. **We will perform a "feasibility inspection" of your proposed business location, if needed.** The inspection allows us to inform you of any code required upgrades or changes upfront so you can make an informed decision.
- 4. **Receive the Feasibility Inspection Report.** We will discuss requirements during the inspection but we will also finalize the feasibility inspection report afterwards and send you a copy. You can refer to this when talking with contractors, design professionals and leasing agents.
- 5. **Prepare and submit construction plans for review, if needed.** If your proposed business location will require significant upgrades, construction plans and permits may be needed.
- 6. **After your plans are approved, select a licensed contractor and obtain your building permit.** Your contractor will complete the work and call for inspections as needed. You will also need to apply for a Sign Permit for any new or replacement signs.
- 7. **When all work is complete and you are ready to open, call for your final inspection.** We will issue a Certificate of Occupancy and approve your Zoning and Building Compliance Form.
- 8. **Obtain your City Business License.** Your Certificate of Occupancy and/or Zoning and Building Compliance Form must be approved to obtain your license. Complete the Business License Application and submit to OFB staff.
- 9. **Set up your utility account.** Your business license application and utility account are processed together. A deposit will be due and is determined by an average of the past utility bills at your location.
- 10. **Open for Business!**

## UTILITY PROVIDERS

### Electric, Water, Sewer, Sanitation

City of Rock Hill  
155 Johnston St.  
Rock Hill, SC 29730  
803-325-2500

[www.cityofrockhill.com](http://www.cityofrockhill.com)



### Gas

York County Natural Gas  
979 W. Main Street  
Rock Hill, SC 29730  
803-323-5304

[www.ycnga.com](http://www.ycnga.com)



### Phone, Cable, Internet

Comporium  
332 E. Main St.  
Rock Hill, SC 29730  
803-326-6011

[www.comporium.com](http://www.comporium.com)

