



SUMTER CITY-COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT



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WILLIAM T. NOONAN
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 3, 2010
TO: Real Estate and Development Industry
FROM: George K. McGregor
RE: Nonconforming Site Standards

In recent weeks, Sumter City Council and Sumter County Council have approved Zoning Ordinance Amendments which change the way we deal with vacant nonconforming sites.

These sites are familiar to all of us – places which are vacant of business activity and lack trees, buffers, curb and gutter, paved parking, etc... Under the old rules, once a property was vacant for six months, property owners were required to bring those nonconforming sites in 100% conformance, regardless of the business or use proposed. The City has extended this period to eighteen months and the County to thirty-six months and both will require less than 100% retro fit in many instances.

Under the new approach, the Planning Commission, the City and the County have moderated these requirements, relaxing the burden on the property owner or applicant. The new method is more proportionate and more directly ties site improvements (outside) to the level of investment in the property—particularly the structure (inside).

It's simple: Small investment in the structure = no required site upgrade
 Medium investment = proportionate site upgrade
 Large investment = 100% site upgrade

The specific ordinance language can be found in the Zoning Ordinance (Article Six) on the City or County website, using the Planning Department Homepage. I urge you to review the changes. Planning Staff is more than happy to go over the changes in more detail in individual meetings. Please let us know. We realize that transitioning to this new method will require patience and partnership between Staff and the development community.

This ordinance change is designed to be more business friendly yet still improve the visual image of Sumter. This revision should minimize the need to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals in most cases dealing with site requirements.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (803) 774-1660.

GKM