

The City of Westminster has developed an agency relationship with Oconee County Community Development that designates and gives authority to Building Codes Division to act as the city's agents and building official(s) to administer and enforce the adopted codes within the city's jurisdiction and municipal boundaries.

## **Mission Statement**

To improve the business development environment and enhance the quality of life for citizens and visitors by minimizing business property maintenance and zoning violations; promoting voluntary compliance; assisting the public navigate through the regulatory process toward a conclusion that meets both their and the City's needs in a timely manner; and encouraging prompt correction of conditions that distract from planned vibrancy and growth in a consistent, fair, and equitable manner.

## **Zoning Codes**

Zoning Codes are adopted through land use/zoning ordinances. These are laws that affect every property owner. They determine what can be done on private and public properties. Zoning ordinances are often written in a style that can be difficult and challenging to a lay person. The city leaders and staff are keenly aware of this complexity and are here to assist you effectively navigate the regulatory process.

*Zoning ordinances have several basic elements:*

1. Land Use - The City of Westminster is divided into residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural areas. Thus land use districts have been established. However, some uses just don't fit into an established district and need to be examined on an individual basis in relation to impact on surroundings and then designed to minimize those impacts. These uses are "special" and require a permit to be built or operated. Hence, a "special use" permit is needed. Because conditions may be placed upon these uses - such as hours of operation or additional landscaping - they are also known as "conditional uses."
2. Development Standards - Development standards are the measurable criteria contained in the zoning ordinance that guides the built height, width, and depth of buildings and structures; minimum lot size, area, and dimensions; parking spaces, etc. It may be reasonable to allow the development standard to vary in a particular instance to accommodate properties with an unusual shape or topography. Thus, an application for a variance from the strict application of the ordinance may be sought.
3. Non-Conformities - Non-conformities occur when a zoning ordinance is adopted after areas are partially developed or other conditions exist prior to a change of use. Regulations are

written so as to determine how and when to allow modifications to those uses, buildings, or structures.

4. Permit Evaluation Criteria - To be consistent and fair in the granting or denial of permits, criteria for evaluating applications was created. This criteria is subjective matters of judgment and intended to assure that decisions are not arbitrary or capricious.
5. Procedures - As Westminster grows and prospers it is necessary to delegate zoning review and code compliance functions to citizen boards and commissions and city staff. Procedures have been established to standardize the processing of zoning related issues.