



## **PLANNING AND ZONING FAQ'S**

### **WHAT IS ZONING?**

Zoning is the dividing of a municipality into districts and the establishment of regulations governing the use, placement, spacing and size of land and buildings. It serves as a regulatory tool in accordance with the city's comprehensive plan, designed to lessen traffic congestion, secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers, promote health and general welfare, provide adequate light and air, prevent the overcrowding of land and abutting trafficways, avoid undue concentration of populations, facilitate the economic and adequate provisions of transportation, water, sewer, schools, parks and other public facilities.

### **WHAT IS A USE DISTRICT?**

The use district is the zoning category for the property. Each use district has a list of permitted uses, conditional uses (require permit) and prohibited uses for development and/or use of the property.

### **WHAT ARE AREA REQUIREMENTS?**

The area requirements are the site requirements for each zoning district which include minimum lot size, property setbacks, parking spaces, landscaping and provide the intensity for the property.

### **WHAT IF THE ZONING DISTRICT DOES NOT ALLOW MY PROPOSED USE?**

You may explore the possibility of requesting a zoning change for the property to a district appropriate for the proposed use or find property that already has the appropriate zoning.

### **WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR A CHANGE OF ZONE?**

This process is about 30 to 45 days with specific application deadlines. If an application is received by deadline date (25 days prior to the meeting date) it is placed on the Planning and Zoning Commission agenda and advertised in the newspaper 15 days prior to the meeting to comply with state law. The Planning and Zoning Commission will then hold a public hearing and later provide a recommendation to the City Commission. The request is then placed on the City Commission agenda for final motion (action).

### **IS THERE A FEE FOR A CHANGE OF ZONE?**

Yes, the fee will depend on the proposed zoning category and the acreage size of the property.

### **HOW MANY APARTMENT UNITS CAN I BUILD ON MY PROPERTY?**

The amount of apartment units that you are allowed to build depends on the area district classification, bedrooms per unit and the total buildable acreage.

### **WHAT IS A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT?**

A conditional use permit allows the city to review and consider uses that are not allowed by right but may be allowed under the right set of circumstances per zoning district. To make a determination applicant must submit an application to the Planning and Zoning Commission to request permission or permit certain uses listed in the zoning ordinance under conditional use. If approved, it will have conditions set forth by the Planning and Zoning Commission and staff.

### **WHEN AND WHERE ARE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETINGS HELD?**

The Planning and Zoning Commission meetings are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month. All Public Hearings are held in Pharr City Hall in the City Commissioners' Room the at Pharr located at 118 South Cage Boulevard, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Pharr, Texas.

**WHAT IS MY PROPERTY ZONED?**

Please provide either the properties warranty deed, address, legal description or Geographic ID # (00-0000-0000-0000-00) to the Planning and Zoning division for zoning.

**WHAT IS A ZONING VERIFICATION LETTER?**

A zoning verification letter is a written confirmation from the city regarding the zoning classification of the property. You must submit an application to our department. The application can be found under the resources tab, picked up in person or emailed. There is a \$75 fee and please allow 2 to 3 business days to process application.

**DO MY NEIGHBORS HAVE TO BE NOTIFIED FOR A CHANGE OF ZONE?**

Yes, as per city ordinance and state law, the city must notify the surrounding real property owners within a 200 feet foot radius from the subject property.

**WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ZONING?**

Uses permitted within each district are listed in the city's zoning ordinance, you can visit the Planning and Zoning Division located at 308 West Park Avenue or visit [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com).

**WHAT IS A PLAT?**

A plat is required in accordance with the Texas Local Government Code and the City of Pharr's Subdivision Ordinance and includes a map of a subdivision that represents a tract of land, showing the boundaries and location of individual properties, streets, easements and other pertinent information. After a plat is approved for final acceptance by the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Commission, it is filed with the Hidalgo County and becomes a legal lot of record.

**WHAT IS THE PLATTING (SUBDIVISION) PROCESS?**

There are several phases to the platting process, meeting with a Planner is a must. Once you hire an engineer to develop preliminary plans, an application with the proposal to subdivide is submitted to the Planning and Zoning Division. The preliminary plat is distributed to different city departments for review to determine the plat's compliance with applicable city ordinances. City staff then makes a recommendation to the Planning and Zoning Commission who will then approve or deny the preliminary plat. If the plat is approved, the engineer will submit construction plans for city departments to review. If approved, the city will issue a Notice to Proceed (NTP). Once improvements are complete and accepted by the city, the engineer submits as-builts plans for a final subdivision walk through, if approved, the plat is placed on the agenda for final plat approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Commission. If approved, the project engineer then submits mylar plat and fees, exclusions, receipts, and tax certificates for recordation.

**WHY IS A PLATTING (SUBDIVISION) REQUIRED?**

The purpose of platting is to meet local and State law requirements designed to promote orderly growth in the City. The platting process ensures that a project is on a legally subdivided lot with proper space for development and with the required utility easements, roadways and public facilities such as water, sewer, and drainage.

**IS THERE A FEE TO PLAT MY PROPERTY?**

The application fee is based on the total acreage. Other development fees will also apply, they include water, sewer, street signs, fire hydrant rings, park land fees (only applies to residential developments), inspection fee and testing fee.

**PLANNING AND ZONING DIVISION**

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