DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

Development Applications & Staff Reviews

During the 2019 calendar year, a total of 139 development applications, excluding withdrawn applications, were submitted to the Planning Department for a multi-department review. The 139 applications resulted in 422 Planning staff reviews. A majority of the applications were completed within two or fewer review cycles, with new site plans/subdivisions being the exception, which required on average four review cycles.

Staff also held 29 formal pre-submittal meetings with potential applicants to discuss high level topics regarding their site plan, subdivision, or rezoning submission.

New Development Application by Type - 2019

- Bulletin Drawing & Minor Modification: 45
- Administrative Waiver*: 30
- Site Plan / Subdivision: 16
- Administrative Adjustment**: 15
- Alternate Landscape Plan: 13
- Telecommunication: 5
- Special Use Permit: 2
- Annexation: 2
- Text Amendment: 2
- Rezoning: 1
- Land Use Plan Amendment: 1

* An administrative waiver is a request to the Planning Director to consider waiving an Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) requirement for a development.
** An administrative adjustment is a request to the Planning Director to consider modifying an Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) requirement per section 2.5.19 of the UDO.

Other Permits & Applications

Department staff are also responsible for processing additional permits and applications. In 2019, among these included 150 assessment inquiries*, 39 zoning compliance letters, 144 preliminary plot plans, 162 final plot plans**, and 109 sign permits.

Staff is also responsible for code enforcement, reviewing commercial building permits for zoning compliance, and conducting various inspections.

* An assessment inquiry is a request for staff to verify the existence of any assessments, or a lien tied to a property.
** A final plot plan is a final survey submitted when work on residential lots is complete.

Final Plot Plans** by Type - 2019

- 19 New Addition
- 2 Accessory
- 76 New Single Family Detached
- 65 New Single Family Attached
- 48 Food Truck
- 109 Sign

Permits by Type - 2019

- 30 items to Town Council
- 14 items to Planning and Zoning Board
- 3 items to Board of Adjustment

Agenda Items

Planning Department staff prepares and presents items to the Planning and Zoning Board (PZB), Board of Adjustment (BOA), and Town Council. In 2019, these included items like rezonings, major site plans, BOA member trainings, Land Use Plan updates and presentations, and workshops on the Affordable Housing and Public Transportation Plans.
Applications & Review

Planning Department staff coordinate special event application review. Applications are reviewed by the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources; Fire; Police; Public Works and Inspections departments to ensure all permit requirements are met and that sufficient Town resources are available to support the event. Planning Department staff coordinated the review of 56 special event applications in 2019. About 60% of these were events repeated from 2018. Special events ranged in size from small private business events to community-wide events with several thousand attendees, and included fireworks, several walk/runs, cultural celebrations and a variety of others. Staff also reviewed permit applications for Town-sponsored events like the annual Springfest, S’Morrisville and public safety educational events.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Applications & Review

Planning Department staff coordinate special event application review. Applications are reviewed by the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources; Fire; Police; Public Works and Inspections departments to ensure all permit requirements are met and that sufficient Town resources are available to support the event. Planning Department staff coordinated the review of 56 special event applications in 2019. About 60% of these were events repeated from 2018. Special events ranged in size from small private business events to community-wide events with several thousand attendees, and included fireworks, several walk/runs, cultural celebrations and a variety of others. Staff also reviewed permit applications for Town-sponsored events like the annual Springfest, S’Morrisville and public safety educational events.

Special Event Permits by Year

- 2019: 56
- 2018: 51
- 2017: 33
- 2016: 30
- 2015: 30
- 2014: 24

Total Residential Units: 941
Total Non-Residential: 957,868 sf

Approved Development

In 2019, the Planning Department approved six new residential developments, which are anticipated to result in the construction of 941 new housing units.

- 811 multi-family units
- 90 single-family attached units
- 40 single-family detached units

Seven commercial developments totaling 957,868 sf were also approved in 2019.

- 675,102 sf office development
- 282,766 sf other commercial uses

Residential

- Alta Morriseville multi-family | 250 units
- Aviation Crossing multi-family | 298 units
- Broadstone Trailside multi-family | 263 units
- North Hampton Townes single-family attached | 62 units
- Thornebury at Town Hall single-family detached | 36 units
- Wilson Road Subdivision single-family detached | 4 units

Non-Residential

- Bee Safe Storage: Retail/Storage 201,366 sf | redevelopment
- INQ 1101: Office 136,760 sf | redevelopment
- The Factory: Office 200,000 sf | redevelopment
- Forty540 Phase II: Office 248,342 sf | new construction
- Market at Perimeter Park: Retail 15,400 sf | new construction
- 4000 Paramount Parkway: Office 90,000 sf | new construction
- Wake Tech Phase II: College 66,000 sf | new construction

Total Non-Residential: 957,868 sf
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Affordable Housing Plan | adopted plan
In the spring of 2019 the Town hired czb, a firm specializing in planning and housing, to develop an affordable housing plan for Morrisville. The objective of the plan was to expand on Wake County’s 2017 Affordable Housing Plan by taking a closer look at the specific housing needs in Morrisville. The plan assessed the housing inventory and trends in Morrisville and provided a better understanding of the affordable housing needs in the Town. The plan also included high level recommendations and strategies that the Town could choose to implement in the future. The recommendations from czb were the result of regional and local data, public outreach from stakeholders and the community at large. The public outreach for the project specifically included a survey with over 350 participants. The project will continue to move forward with implementation strategies in 2020.

Land Use Plan | plan webpage
Houseal Lavigne was selected in 2018 as the consultant to update the Town’s Land Use Plan. The Plan will provide long-range recommendations that direct growth, investment, and development. The update process involves revising all seven sections of the 2009 Land Use Plan, includes a fiscal/economic impact analysis, conceptual visuals, and provides enhanced focus on three specific areas of Town. Once adopted, the Plan will create a framework for future land use policy in Morrisville.

Throughout 2019, staff held workshops with Town Council and the Planning and Zoning Board to get consensus on the sub-area plan. The Draft Future Land Use Map and associated Future Land Use Descriptions were presented to the project’s Technical Advisory Committee and Planning and Zoning Board at the end of 2019. These work sessions provided input that Town Council later considered in their January 2020 work session. A draft plan is expected to be presented to Town Council in 2020.

Comprehensive Transportation Plan | adopted plan
The Comprehensive Transportation Plan was formally adopted in March after a multi-year process starting in 2016 of public engagement and staff working with Kimley-Horn to develop an updated Plan. The Plan recommends multi-modal improvements focusing on the roadway, pedestrian, and bikeway network. In addition, the Plan provides prioritization of projects and a list of recommended policy changes.

Wake County Hazard Mitigation Plan | adopted plan website
Wake County and the 12 municipalities in the county developed a Countywide Hazard Mitigation Plan. The planning process began in late 2018 with staff meeting regularly with the Western Wake Sub-Committee to provide input throughout plan development. The Plan provides 20+ potential Morrisville specific action items that can help the Town mitigate impacts from natural disasters. The Plan was presented to the Planning and Zoning Board in November and adopted by the Town Council in January 2020.

Public Transportation Study | accepted plan
The Town received funding from the Wake Transit Plan in 2019 to fund a portion of the study to examine the next steps of public transportation in Morrisville. The Town selected Nelson\Nygaard to evaluate multiple transit options and to develop recommendations that staff could bring forward to Town Council. The recommendations were developed using market demands, travel patterns, and public outreach events. During the outreach period, staff held a total of seven public events, including at SpringFest and Music in the Park. The consultant also hosted a survey with 260+ respondents that asked about funding prioritization for public transportation.

In 2020, staff will submit an application for funding through the Wake Transit Plan, and if chosen for funding, will pursue a plan for implementation.
**Projects, Updates, and Initiatives**

**Energov**
- Energov is the new customer portal for all development applications. The 2+ year development process went live in 2019. Almost all Planning development applications can now be submitted electronically and reviewed digitally.

**Process Improvements**
- An interactive roadway project map, detailing roadway projects and timelines, was developed and can be found on the Town’s Interactive Maps webpage.
- Updates to the Administrative Manual were made to reflect changes to staffing, submittal checklists, plant/tree lists, and review schedules.
- “A Citizens Guide to Rezonings” brochure was designed by staff and will be included with future public notice mailings.
- Town staff have worked to identify and file 60+ missing annexation ordinances at the Land Records Division that were adopted by the Town Council.

**Code Amendments**
- An omnibus of text changes, including updates to the Main Street District, were presented to the Planning and Zoning Board in the fall of 2019 and adopted in January 2020 by Town Council.
- In August, a text amendment passed Town Council changing the payment-in-lieu process for developments located along NCDOT roadway projects.

**Community Outreach**
- The 2nd Developers Forum was held in May with staff sharing process changes with the development community. Attendees discussed code changes and general ideas for departmental improvement.
- Brad West and Rodney Wadkins held outreach events highlighting the 2020 census. Staff is working closely with Wake County to increase participation and general awareness of the 2020 census.

**Giving Back to Morrisville**
- Planning Department staff volunteered at the annual SpringFest and S’Morrisville on National S’mores Day.

Seven members of the Planning staff received awards at the Celebration of Service Event held by the Town in October for their dedication to serving the community by working the S’Morrisville event.

**Staffing Updates**
- Code Enforcement Officer John Barnard retired from the Planning Department after serving 16 years.
- Rodney Wadkins and the GIS Department transferred to the Town’s IT Department. Rodney had previously worked in the department for 19 years.
- In July, Brad West was promoted from Planner II in the Long Range Division to Senior Planner. Brad began as a Planner I in the Planning Department and has worked for the Town for 9 years.
- Eliot Ward was promoted to Planner II in July. He previously spent 2 years as a Planner I in the Current Planning Division.
- Chris Lawson, Natalie Nye, and Dylan Bruchhaus passed the Certified Zoning Official exam.
- Chris Lawson became certified by the American Institute of Certified Planners.
- Emily Langston joined the team in December as a Planner I. Emily graduated from UNC in May with a Master’s in Public Administration, where she has had teaching and researching experience. She also had previous experience working in the Oregon State Government and in Wake County.