



Site Development Plan Review Process

Site Development Plans are regulated by Athens Zoning Ordinance paragraph 2.5.2.D.

Submission Checklist

- Application (page 8)
- 2 Paper copies (ANSI D or ARCH D paper size and appropriate scale)
- PDF Digital Site Plan

Applicability

Site Plan review is required for **ALL** multi-family and non-residential projects requiring a Certificate of Occupancy.

Review Process

1. **Pre-Application Conference.** A Pre-Application Conference is not required but strongly recommended for projects subject to Site Development Plan Review. In said conference the applicant may meet with Department staff and representatives of other appropriate agencies to receive information on and discuss all applicable requirements for the anticipated project. It is the intent of said conference to ensure that the applicant has all necessary information regarding applicable regulations and further to ensure the proper completion of required submittals to enable timely, efficient review and response by City and other reviewing agencies regarding the anticipated development application.
2. **Application.** Read the Considerations section before submitting. Applicants are required to send a digital PDF copy of the site plan to the Engineering Services & Community Development Department. The PDF of the site plan must have an appropriate page size format (ANSI D or ARCH D) and an appropriate scale. This begins the review.
3. **Review.** The City does their review using an electronic review website. After a period of 30 days ES&CD department will give a report of how the plan does not meet requirements and is a denial of the site plan until these comments are addressed. That report will be comments on the PDF file or text comments. Once a revised plan has been submitted, this restarts the 30 day review period. This review is done with digital drawings. Staff may request additional paper copies or CAD drawings may be requested at any time during the process.
 - a. **Appeal.** If the applicant disagrees with the denial of the plan, the decision may be appealed to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission decision may be appealed to the City Council.
4. **Final Site Plan.** Submit a finalized site plan PDF with a signature block on the front page. This plan needs a signature block for the following departments: Electric, Gas, Water/Wastewater (or Limestone Co. Water & Sewer Authority, service area dependant), Fire, Engineering

Services, City Engineer, Street, and Sanitation. ALL departments must approve the finalized plan. Departments will only sign plans once they are satisfied that all of their comments have been addressed.

- a. **Physical Signature Alternative.** The applicant or their designee may carry around a physical copy of the site plan to obtain the necessary signatures. In this case, the City Engineer will be the last person who will sign the drawing.

5. **Planning Commission.**

- a. Some Site Plans additionally have to go before the Planning Commission. Site Plans that must be heard, reviewed, and decided by the Planning Commission are as follows (Zoning Ord. 2.3.2.A[4]):
 - i. Public projects as defined in Sec. 11-52-11 of the Code of Alabama 1975, as amended.
 - ii. Non-residential projects requiring the placement of more than one primary building on a single lot.
 - iii. Non-residential developments comprising more than 25,000 sf of gross floor area regardless of the number of buildings, except where the proposed development is an expansion of an existing non-residential development for which the total floor area of the existing and proposed uses exceeds 25,000 sf.
 - iv. Appeals of administrative denial of site development plans.
 - v. Appeals to modify design standards required for development plans pursuant to Sec. 6.1.15.
- b. These site plans will be placed on the agenda for the meeting only after ALL departments have approved the final site plan.
- c. Planning Commission meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 5:45 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall (200 Hobbs Street West, Athens, AL 35611).

6. **Notice.** The Zoning Official will notify the applicant that the site plan has been approved. After the signatures are obtained, building permits may be obtained.

Department Review Team (DRT)

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|---|---|---|
| Engineering Services Dept. — Planner position vacant 256-233-2224 | | Athens City Hall 200 Hobbs St. West Athens, AL 35611 |
| City Engineer — Michael Griffin mgriffin@athensal.us | | |
| Fire Dept — James Hand jhand@athensal.us | | 256-233-8710 |
| Engineering Service Dept. — Micah Cochran mcochran@athensal.us | | Public Works Building 1600 Elm St. West Athens, AL 35611 |
| Sanitation Dept. — Earl Glaze dbradford@athensal.us | | |
| Street Dept. — Dolph Bradford eglaze@athensal.us | | |
| Engineering Services Dept. — Micah Cochran mcochran@athensal.us | | |
| Electric Dept. — Jim Lannom jlannom@athens-utilities.com | 256-232-1440 Athens Utilities 1806 Wilkinson St. Athens, AL 35611 | |
| Gas Dept. — Paul King pking@athens-utilities.com | | |
| Water / Wastewater — Harrison Bauer hbauer@athens-utilities.com | | |

Expiration of Approval

Site Development Plan approval expires after 1 year after the date of issuance, unless within such time the Building Official has issued a Building Permit or Certificate of Occupancy for the work authorized under a Site Plan approval.

Zoning Ordinance - Site Development Plans

This is from Zoning Ordinance paragraph 2.5.2.D.

D. Site Development Plan.

1) Requirements. Prior to removal of natural vegetation, restructuring of the land, or construction of any improvements, an approved final site development plan is required for all developments stipulated in subsection 2.5.2.B.2. A site development plan shall be submitted to the Zoning Official for review by the Department Review Team, which is consistent with any preliminary development plan, and containing:

- a) A site plan showing:
 - (i) The direction of north, appropriate scale and topography in not greater than two (2) foot contour intervals.
 - (ii) The proposed location and height of all structures.
 - (iii) The use of all structures and land.
 - (iv) The location and use of structures adjacent to the site.
 - (i) The location, area and number of parking spaces and maneuvering areas. For parking requirements, refer to Section 6.5. Include the method used to calculate the parking with the proposed uses. Include an inventory of spaces that are no-restrictions, accessible (van/car), compact, tandem, time/day restricted, etc. Indicate on-street spaces and off-street spaces being claimed.
 - (ii) The location and dimensions of streets, driveways and walks on and off the site.
 - (iii) All service and loading spaces.
 - (iv) The location, size, number and character of all exterior signs and lighting. For photometric plans, refer to Section 6.7.
 - (v) The location, character and extent of existing vegetation, landscaping, retaining and screen walls and other treatment for the protection of adjoining property. For landscaping requirements, refer to Section 6.2.
 - (vi) The facilities for surface drainage of the premises.
 - (vii) Location and character of all public improvements including utilities.
- b) All site development plans shall bear the seal of the applicant's engineer, landscape architect, architect, and/or surveyor as applicable for the type of project.
- c) The public improvements included in the final development plan shall be consistent with the Athens Subdivision Regulations.
- d) A copy of any deed restrictions to be recorded.
- e) A comprehensive traffic analysis indicating the probable effect of the proposed development on traffic patterns and capacities of adjacent streets in the immediate area, prepared by a registered professional engineer. (When required by the adopted Traffic Circulation Standards).
- f) A development schedule indicating the approximate date when construction of the development or stages thereof can be expected to begin.
- g) Any other information necessary to establish compliance with this and other ordinances or the availability of adequate utility capacity.

- h) A fire protection plan, approved by the Athens Fire Department, indicating the location of all proposed fire hydrants, and fire access lanes, as well as a description of all fire protection measures and devices for structures, which is to include sprinkler system designed and approved pursuant to the fire prevention code as currently adopted by the City of Athens.
 - i) Signature approval blocks for reviewing departments.
 - j) Notes related to any State/Federal permits that have been granted or are in process for any improvements being made to the site.
- 2) Site development plan review.
- a) Upon receipt of an applicant's site development plan, the Zoning Official shall transmit a copy of the plan to the Department Review Team for their review, report, and recommendation.
 - b) The Department Review Team shall within thirty (30) days from receiving the plan and documentation, furnish to the Zoning Official a report pertinent to their respective jurisdiction and concerns.
 - c) The Department Review Team shall approve or disapprove the plan. If disapproved, the Zoning Official shall also prepare a written report stating clearly the reasons and justification therefore, and identify what changes are necessary in order for the plan to be approved. Such written disapproval shall be transmitted to the applicant.
 - d) When the site development plan appears to be in conformity with all applicable regulations and codes, the applicant shall obtain signatures from all representatives on the Department Review Team on final, physical copies of the site plan. A signed copy of the approved site development plan shall be retained in the records of ES&CD.
 - e) The approved site development plan is not a subdivision plat. The city's subdivision regulations shall be enforced with regard to the subdivision of land and the dedication of public improvements.
- 3) Amending approved site development plan.
- a) Minor changes in the location, siting, elevation, or character of buildings and structures as shown on the final development plan may be authorized by the zoning administrator. No change authorized by the zoning administrator under this section may increase the size of any building or structure by more than ten (10) percent, nor change the location of any building, or structure by more than ten (10) feet in any direction; provided, notwithstanding anything in the foregoing, the zoning administrator may not permit changes beyond the minimum or maximum requirements set forth in this ordinance. All other changes in the site development plan must be made under the procedures that are applicable to the initial approval of a site development plan.
- 4) Expiration of Site Development Plan Approval. The site development plan approval shall expire, and be of no effect, one (1) year after the date of issuance thereof, unless within such time the Building Official has issued a Building Permit or Certificate of Occupancy for any proposed work authorized under a Site Plan approval.

5) Appeals to the Planning Commission. Nothing in this section shall operate to abridge the rights of any applicant for a site development plan approval under this Section. An applicant, aggrieved by the Departmental Review Team's denial of a Site Plan application, may appeal to the Planning Commission.

6) Appeals to the City Council. Nothing in this section shall operate to abridge the rights of any applicant for a site development plan approval under this Section. An applicant, aggrieved by the Commission's denial of a Site Plan application, may appeal to the Council.

Considerations

Please consider all of the following BEFORE submitting a site development plan. Sites with non-conforming improvements see Zoning Ord. subsec. 3.5.6.

- Is the proposed use permitted within the zoning district?
- Buildings must meet setbacks requirements for the Zoning District (See Zoning Ord. Article 4 or 5 for setback information).
 - Major arterial roads, US Highway 72 and US Highway 31, require a 50-foot setback with the first 20 feet being reserved for landscaping (Zoning Ord. para. 6.1.5.D).
- Zoning is divided into Traditional Districts and Conventional Districts, in some sections of the Zoning Ordinance will reference different design requirements.
 - The Traditional Districts are all the districts defined in the Zoning Ordinance Article 4. Many of the Traditional Zoning districts have Traditional in the name with some exceptions.
 - Conventional Districts are all in Zoning Ordinance Article 5.
- Athens Zoning Ordinance Article 6 are the Development Standards. This has many of the Zoning requirements for a particular site.
 - Adequate Landscaping designed to the Zoning Ordinance § 6.2
 - Include easement and location of utilities
 - If too busy, provide a separate page that merges landscaping and utilities.
 - Ensure that plants specified are not invasive (Zoning Ord. Item 6.2.3.B[7][b]) per the ordinance or a reputable source. One such reputable source is the Alabama Invasive Plant Council <https://www.se-eppc.org/alabama/>
 - Exterior Lighting Zoning Ord. § 6.7
 - Photometric plan, using LUX as the unit.
 - Hue must be consistent for lighting
 - Adequate Parking designed to Zoning Ordinance § 6.5
 - Within minimum and maximum parking requirements (Zoning Ord. Table 6-2, Table 6-3, and para. 6.5.4.F)
 - Provide calculations for determining parking requirements
 - Provide buffering between dissimilar uses, see Zoning Ord. Table 6-1 for applicability.
 - Provide building elevations that label building materials.
 - Building Material requirements, non-residential in Zoning Ord. paragraph 6.1.12.F and residential Zoning Ord. item 6.1.9.A(8)
 - In the Traditional Zoning Districts building material may be further restricted, see Zoning Ord. Article 4.
 - Location of detached signage.
 - Signage can be considered at Site Plan (Zoning Ord. section 6.8), but it is approved through a separate Permanent Sign Application process.
 - Sidewalk infrastructure is typically required (Zoning Ord. subsec. 6.6.14)

- ❑ Connect to the public sidewalk system and have a continuous pathway to primary building entrances (Zoning Ord. subsec 6.6.7).
- ❑ Provide for cross access between uses, see Zoning Ord. para. 6.6.5.C.
- ❑ Utilities must be placed underground, except in M-1 and M-2 districts, see Zoning Ord. sec. 6.9.
- ❑ Dumpsters must meet Zoning Ord subsec. 6.3.5 and Dumpster spec.
- ❑ Outdoor areas for garbage cans and recycling bins must be screened (Zoning Ord. subsec. 6.2.8).
- ❑ Traffic Impact Study, applicability to site is in Athens Traffic Circulation Standards Table 3.
- ❑ Provides adequate driveway spacing (Traffic Circulation Standards Section 3 for street classification, use Table 2 to determine the spacing between driveways/roads).
- ❑ Hydrography
 - ❑ Show any Special Flood Hazard Districts, Floodway, and reference where the data came from (FEMA FIRM Map panel).
 - ❑ Drainage Report with reference on plans to it and cross sections of all drainage, ponds, and outlet structures.
 - ❑ Identify USGS blue lines streams, wetlands, or environmentally sensitive areas.
- ❑ Location of nearest fire hydrant(s).
- ❑ Signature block on the first page for the following departments: Electric, Gas, Water/Wastewater (or Limestone Co. Water & Sewer Authority, service area dependant), Fire, Engineering Services, and City Engineer.
- ❑ Show easements and distinguish between public easements and privately held easements.
- ❑ Locations of utilities lines and infrastructure.

Questions

Can a site plan be amended?

Yes. Documentation can be submitted and the zoning administrator may sign off on minor changes, see Zoning Ordinance 2.5.2.D(3).

Before Final Certificates of Occupancy

These are some items that need to be handled before a Certificate of Occupancy will be issued.

- ❑ Complete As-Built form. It must be signed by the civil engineer of record certifying that the project has been fully and satisfactorily completed in accordance with the approved plan and the provisions of the zoning ordinance.
- ❑ Provide .DWG or .PDF format "As-built".
 - ❑ If only a .PDF is submitted it must be vector format, and must include georeferenced geometry.
- ❑ Letter of certification stating that the date of the final inspection with the City Engineer that all improvements were constructed as approved.



Site Plan Review Application

Submittal Date: _____

1. Project Name: _____

2. Applicant's Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Num.: _____

Email: _____

3. Architect/Engineer's Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Num.: _____

Email: _____

4. Other Professional firms involved:

5. Description of Property (Street Address, General Location, etc.):

Street Address: _____

On the _____ side of _____, _____ feet of _____ (NSEW direction)

6. Section/Township/Range _____

7. Zoning Classification _____

8. Type of development proposed (residential, business, industrial, other): _____

Number of Structures: _____

Number of Dwelling Units: _____

Number of Non-Residential Units: _____