

Input and review

Twice a month, you have the opportunity to meet with the Technical Review Committee (TRC), a team of City employees to help you, your architect, and your contractor. The committee's collective advice will save you time and money. You'll get feedback specific to your business as it may relate to urban planning, building and fire codes, utilities, and streets. To schedule the presentation of your business concept and plans, just visit the Community Development Department at City Hall to request a Pre-Application Conference with the TRC or call our office at 904-310-3135.

The Historic District Council (HDC) is the steward of Old Town, Downtown, and the Community Redevelopment Area (CRA). The HDC uses design guidelines and needs to review most work that involves a change to the exterior of your building. You can find maps, design guidelines, and forms online at www.fbfl.us/historicdistrict. Depending on your projects, you may need only staff-level HDC review instead of Board review. It's generally good to know that a business in any of these parts of the City may require additional time and attention. Ask us about your project and we'll be happy to explain what may require the HDC's approval and the process involved.

All of us in Community Development want to help you navigate your way through the necessary applications, licenses, permits, and inspections so you can get your business up and running quickly. Depending on the nature of your business and location, we'll review applicable requirements and identify the things you need to know.



**We look forward to working
with you and celebrating
your new business!**

**City of Fernandina Beach
Community Development
904.310.3146**

Important websites:

sunbiz.org

myflorida.com

irs.gov

sba.gov

sbdc.unf.edu

aifby.com

fbfl.us/cdd

fbfl.us/Document Center

fbfl.us/historicdistrict

Opening a Business in Fernandina Beach



**City of Fernandina Beach
Community Development
904.310.3146**

**Monday - Friday
8 am to 5 pm**

**Visit us online at
www.fbfl.us/business**

October 2014

Congratulations!



It's an exciting time to think about opening or buying a business. It can also be an overwhelming task to coordinate all of the steps involved in creating, financing, and implementing your business concept.

This brochure is designed to provide an overview of opening a business in Fernandina Beach. There are many resources available to you, so it's never too early to contact us with your idea for a business. Because you'll need to know which permits and approvals you'll need, as well as understand the impact on your opening timeline and investment, we are here to help you through the process and are committed to your success. Our goal is to help you save time and money — and get open for business.

Starting a New Business

After you've decided the structure of your business (sole proprietorship, partnership, LLC, or corporation) and created your legal entity, you'll need to register with the State of Florida to obtain a business or professional license. If you're using a business name, you'll need to register that name as well. If you're planning to serve alcohol, sell tobacco, or prepare and serve food, you'll want to familiarize yourself with the State of Florida requirements. You'll find forms and valuable links at www.sunbiz.org and www.myflorida.com.



The Federal government requires that most new businesses obtain an Employer

Identification Number (EIN). You may check on this requirement at www.irs.gov and search for "EIN".



In the City of Fernandina Beach, all businesses are required to have a Local Business Tax Receipt (LBTR). Look for the

application form online at www.fbfl.us in the Document Center/City Forms/Community Development/Business section or in the CDD office at City Hall. You'll need to renew your LBTR each year your business remains in operation. Yearly renewal notices are automatically sent to the address and contact on file, so if there are any changes with the ownership, location, or nature of your business, you'll need to notify the City as soon as they take place. Below, you'll find tips for planning and preparing your space.

Home-Based Businesses

With the high quality of life on Amelia Island, many relocate here and want to offer professional services from their homes. Staff can assist you in determining whether or not home-based businesses are allowable in your location. A home-based business does not have regular customer traffic or prepare food like storefront businesses and restaurants, but may include operations like consulting services, tutoring or music lessons, or cleaning and carpentry services. Equipment stored outdoors must be concealed and not interfere with the neighborhood atmosphere. Other requirements may apply; check with staff if you have questions. If you'll be operating a service business out of your home, be sure to review and sign the City's *Affidavit for Home Business Tax form*, which explains many of the policies regarding home-based businesses.

Storefronts or Business Offices

From permanent signs and awnings to temporary banners, parking and access issues to build-out requirements, there are a number of considerations as you're planning the use of your space.

The charm of our community is preserved when we respect and observe specific guidelines. Our safety is protected when we enlist the expertise of those who can help us identify potential hazards and risks. Take a few moments now to understand all that might be required and solicit our support early in the process. Even if your concept seems simple and straightforward, it's a good idea to get input from the Community Development staff early in the planning process.



New Development or Changing Use

Are you planning on building a new building or will your business be a different type of business than was previously in your space? Be aware that you may need to discuss your proposed changes with the City's Technical Review Committee. Properties are part of a comprehensive plan for our City, are zoned, and are required to follow codes that guide how the property is used. You'll also need to consider the impact of parking and utilities as well as matters concerning public access. We're here to help you navigate the technical side of local, state and federal codes and requirements.

Discovering Hidden Issues

To avoid surprises, we recommend a thorough inspection of your space

before you sign a lease or buy a building. You may request a written confirmation for the zoning of the property (*Zoning Confirmation Request*) and ask for specific details about the property (*Due Diligence Request*) where City staff will research the property for you. Take time to learn what may be hidden or unknown about the building and property. Whether you're leasing or buying, you should expect your real estate agent to be able to provide much of this information.



Renovating & Improving Your Space

Enhancing the space for your business is possibly one of the largest investments you'll have to make. From adding a deck to renovating a restroom in order to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, construction projects may need prior approval through our permitting process. Additional projects that may need review are things such as fencing, placement of storage units, signage, and other items common to businesses. To maintain the character of Fernandina Beach and to assure public safety, many items require review and permits before work begins. Professional drawings may be required, so look to local architects and contractors to detail your plans. Check with CDD staff before you start a project, and we can help you figure out what process or steps you will need to follow. We can also help determine whether your exterior plans require Historic District Council approval.

Keeping Everyone Safe

It's our job to make sure that buildings are safe for everyone, so we require that you use contractors that are



licensed by the State of Florida or are certified in their trade by Nassau County. You or your contractor will need to submit permit applications for each type of work you'll have done. Professionals know the codes requirements, will do things correctly, and help you pass your final inspections, keeping you on schedule for your opening. If you aren't sure if something needs a permit, just let us know and we can help you figure it out.



Using Public Space

If your business is located downtown and you'd like to use the sidewalk for signage, seating, or planters, you will need to submit a *Historic District Council staff-approval application* and also use the *Right-of-Way Encroachment Application*. You may also need to submit this application if you need to use the sidewalks or public parking during construction projects or other events.

Marketing Your Business with Signage

Most signage in the City requires a permit. For permanent signs, sandwich boards, window lettering, awnings, temporary banners affixed to the exterior of your space (like Grand Opening signs), and directional signs in the Historic District (the stacked signs at street corners), please obtain the appropriate CDD *sign permit application forms*. Staff can assist you with questions you may have as to what types and size of signs are allowed in what locations. Different zoning districts can have different signage requirements. Please note you do need HDC staff-approval prior to submitting a sign permit application for businesses in the historic districts or CRA.

