OPENING A BUSINESS IN DOWNTOWN YORK

A Simple Guide to Getting Started

START with the Business Navigator

Thinking about opening a business in Downtown York? Start with the City's Business Navigator through Main Street York.

We'll help you understand the steps, answer questions, and connect you with the appropriate City departments for zoning, permits, inspections, and business licensing. Reach out before signing a lease or purchasing a building so we can help you get started.

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Before signing a lease or purchasing a building:

- Walk the space with a licensed contractor or design professional.
- Identify potential costs, improvements, and timelines early.
- Confirm city's zoning rules for your business type.
- Understand that requirements vary by property and business type.
- Consider developing a business plan to better understand startup costs, operations, and long-term feasibility.
- Even minor changes to a business type, layout, or operations may result in additional reviews, permits, or changes to the approval process.

Change of Use

• May require stamped plans.

• Must meet building codes.

• Start early—this can take several weeks.

Building Over 5,000 Sq Ft

• May require stamped plans.

• Ask your landlord or reach out to the Planning Dept. for guidance.

Historic District

• Exterior changes may require approval from the Board of Architectural Review.

• The Planning Dept. helps guide process
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• Approval required before work begins.

⚠️ KEEP IN MIND

- Permits may be required for interior and exterior work.
- A fire inspection is required before final approval
- City business license required before operating.
- Fees and timelines vary.

💵 FEES TO EXPECT (Costs Will Vary):

- **Planning Department:** POB Application Fee, Review Fee, Permit Fees, Impact Fee, and Design Fee
- **Fire Department:** Fire Inspection Fee
- **Business Administration:** Business License Fee

❗ REQUIRED TO OPERATE BUSINESS

Before opening, you must have:

- Certificate of Occupancy **(*verifies code compliance, not permission to operate.*)**
- South Carolina Retail License
- City of York Business License

🍽️ FOOD & BEVERAGE BUSINESSES

Require:

- Retail Food Establishment Permit **(SC Dept. of Agriculture)**
- SC Retail License
- City Business License

Food Trucks also require:

- Commissary Agreement
- Fire Inspection Certificate
- Local approval

HOSPITALITY TAX (2%):

Applies to:

- Restaurants, bars, and food establishments.
- Prepared or modified food & beverages for immediate consumption.

Note: *Caterers are exempt*

Hospitality Tax must be paid monthly to the City of York.