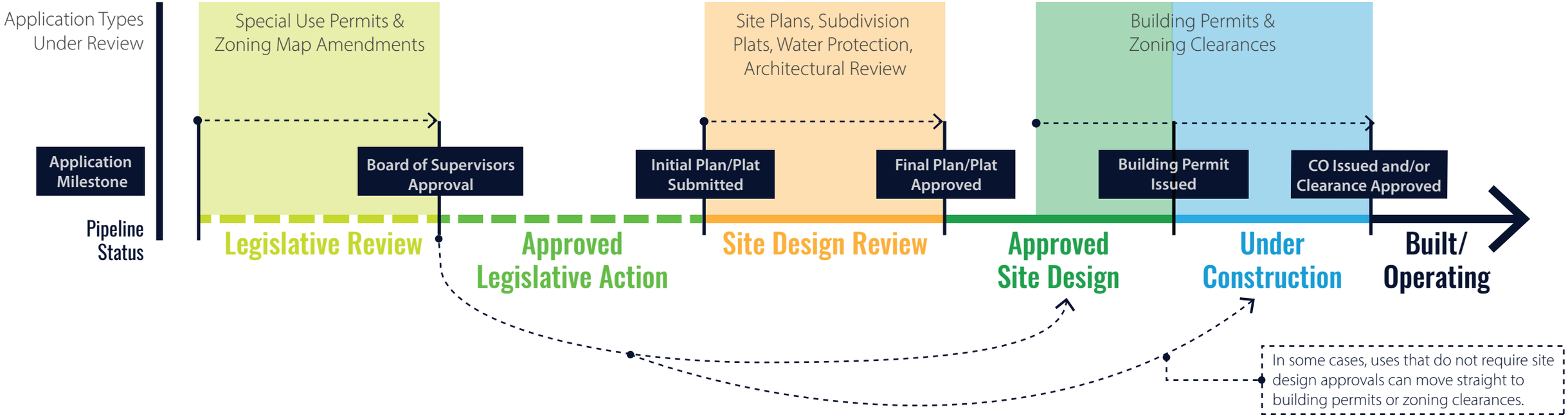
How does development happen in Albemarle County?



Pre-Application Meeting

The developer or property owner attends a meeting with County staff to understand the development process and potential challenges.

This is **REQUIRED** *for all decisions that go before the Board of Supervisors. (See "Special Legislative Permissions")*

Is the proposed development "by-right" or does it require legislative action?

Legislative Review

If you want to change the zoning designation or get special approval for certain uses, this requires review for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and legislative action **by the Board of Supervisors.**

Does the proposed development require changing the zoning district to allow for different uses, densities or design regulations than those allowed in the current district?

Zoning Map Amendments

Zoning Map Amendments (ZMAs) change a property's zoning district (otherwise known as a rezoning) and are approved by the Board of Supervisors.

By-Right

By-right projects involve uses allowed in the current zoning district. They go through an administrative review process to ensure they comply with the County code.

Does the proposed development include one of the "special uses" listed in the Zoning Ordinance?

Special Use Permits

The Board of Supervisors grants special approvals for certain uses, which also impose conditions upon those approved uses.

Site Design Planning

Does the proposed development involve new construction, new lots, increased traffic or a new road entrance?

If so, County staff review proposed designs to ensure that they meet regulations and protect public health, safety and welfare.

Approved Legislative Action

Approved Legislative Action

Subdivision (new lots)

Parcels are split or their lot boundaries are adjusted. This includes areas dedicated for roads or easements. County staff review and approved.

Site Development Review (new construction)

County staff review proposed site plans that include building placement, parking, street designs, landscaping and utilities.

Water Protection Ordinance

Larger projects with the potential to affect water resources must have approved plans to minimize their impact.

Architectural Review

Buildings, signs, and landscaping are reviewed by the Architectural Review Board in certain areas that contain historic and cultural resources.

Waivers, Special Exceptions & Variances

A project may request relief from certain requirements of the County Code. Depending on the request, relief may be granted administratively (by staff) or by the Board of Supervisors or a Board-appointed body such as the Planning Commission or Board of Zoning Appeals.

Site Review Committee

The Site Review Committee (made up of County staff from various departments) review initial site plans, preliminary subdivisions, and major amendments to plats.

Building & Zoning Permits

Building, Engineering and Zoning Inspections staff review plans to ensure compliance with building code and approved plans.

Building Permit Issued → Construction → Final Inspection by County Staff → Certificate of Occupancy (CO) Issued

Clearances

Commercial and Industrial businesses are subject to final review to ensure busineses can operate safely.

Code Compliance

County staff ensure that properties and businesses stay in compliance with County regulations over time.

Required Next Step

Optional Next Steps

DISCLAIMER: This is an illustrative document that is meant to provide an overview of Albemarle County's development review process. It is **not** to be construed as official interpretation of the County code, given that every proposed development is different and moves through the process accordingly.