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Santa Rosa County Sees Increase in Development Activity

Recent estimates from the University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research anticipate a 9 percent increase in the population of Santa Rosa County over the next five years and permit activity in the Development Services Center supports that estimate.

Between January and May of this year, the county issued 2,737 building permits, a 5 percent increase over the same period last year and a 45 percent increase over the same period in 2012 according to the Market Graphics Research Group June report.

An average of 97 new permits were issued each month for single family homes during the first half of 2015, compared to 73 per month between January and June of 2014. Correspondingly, the cost of new construction for that time period is up almost 18 percent.

The county has also seen an increase in new development market share as compared to other counties in the region. In 2011, only 14.32 percent of all permits issued in the eight-county region were issued in Santa Rosa County. By 2014, that number had increased to 17.36 percent and was 18.34 percent for the first five months of 2015 according to the Market Graphics Research Group.

More information about development in Santa Rosa County can be found online at www.SantaRosa.fl.gov/developmentservices.



Quick Links



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Revised Shoreline Erosion and Sedimentation Control Requirements



The Land Development Code was recently amended to provide more reliable prevention of erosion and sedimentation into waterways during the development process. Specifically, the previous requirement for one row of silt fencing was changed to require one of the following:

- Two rows of silt fencing with hay bales between, or
- Two rows of hay bales with silt fencing between, or
- Filter sock system

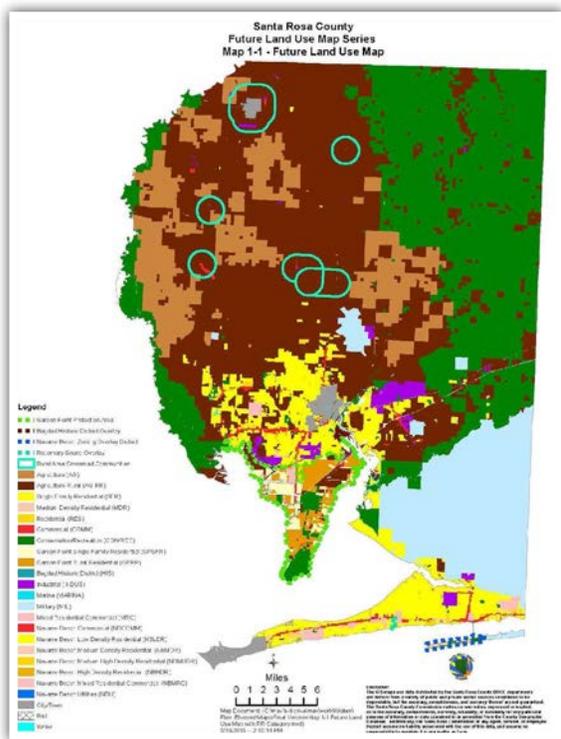
Alternatively, the developer may proposed a method for controlling sediment that effectively prevents all sediment from entering the water body.

Runoff of soils into our water bodies reduces the amount of sunlight and heat reaching aquatic vegetation due to small particles that remain suspended in the water. In addition, heavier particles sink to the water bottom smothering aquatic life in those areas. This results in loss of important nursery habitat and food sources for fish and other species. The revised erosion control measures are designed to protect these resources from erosion during the construction process.

Santa Rosa's Development Service Center was created to provide a collaborative and comprehensive approach to customer service. The DSC enables residents and property owners to accomplish all of their development related county business at one location, with the help of well trained and organized county employees.

How's our customer service? www.santarosa.fl.gov/customerservice/survey.html

Comprehensive Plan Update Project



The Santa Rosa County Planning and Zoning Division has been working on updating the county’s comprehensive plan this year. The comprehensive plan is the official public document adopted by the Santa Rosa County Commission to guide decision-making related to the physical development of the county. In Florida, each city and county are required to adopt and maintain a comprehensive plan. In general, the contents of the plan are all-inclusive, general and long range.

- All-inclusive means that the plan addresses all geographical parts of the unincorporated county and all functional elements that can affect physical, cultural and community development.
- General means that it includes general policies and designations, not detailed regulations.
- Long range means that the plan looks beyond pressing current issues to the problems and possibilities of years in the future.

In 2011, the Florida Legislature made significant changes to the comprehensive planning requirements in Florida. These changes included repealing Rules 9J-5 and 9J-11.1023 of the Florida Administrative Code - which removed a substantial amount of the specificity previously required to be included in local government comprehensive plans. These changes provided an opportunity for Santa Rosa County to develop a

revised comprehensive plan that, while still meeting state level planning requirements, is more locally relevant. Along those lines, staff has been working to eliminate policies that are not meaningful or really related to growth and development in Santa Rosa County.

Staff has also been updating the plan’s supporting documentation and policies to ensure that the information contained therein is up to date and relevant to the issues the county is facing long term. The overall goal in comprehensive planning is basically to ensure that the county grows in a manner that is both financially sustainable and desirable to all future and current residents. The intent of the plan is not to limit growth but rather to time that growth with the availability of infrastructure and guide it in a manner that will serve to protect Santa Rosa County’s unique environment and quality of life.



It is anticipated that this project will be completed towards the end of the year, at which time planning staff will work with our reviewing state and regional agencies to ensure that the plan eventually adopted is consistent with state level requirements. A series of public meetings has been planned as part of this project and a website has been developed in order to aid the public in providing input.

For more information see the project website located at www.santarosa.fl.gov/development/services/CompPlan.cfm.

Holley Navarre Water System to Offer Reduced Tap Fees

The Holley Navarre Water System will offer temporary discounted tap fees for new non-residential development beginning Sept. 1. The business will receive a 25 percent reduction in water and wastewater tap fees regardless of the size or number of employees. If the business employs 30 or more full time employees, they will receive a 50 percent reduction.



To be eligible, qualifying businesses must receive a building permit between Sept. 1, 2015 and Aug. 31, 2016. The development must be completed and have received its certificate of occupancy no later than Feb. 28, 2017 and maintain continuous operation for a period of five years. If the business fails to maintain continuous operation, the property will be subject to the prevailing tap fees at the time of future development.

For more information, call the Holley Navarre Water System at (850) 939-2427.



Over the last few years the construction trend has continued to increase for both commercial and residential in Santa Rosa County. With the increase of reviews, permits and inspections, development services is at a point where both the level of service we can reasonably provide and the level of fees needed to fund those services are being reviewed. The Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners has recently directed staff to review neighboring counties and provide comparisons to them during the upcoming budget hearings. If the board chooses to raise the current fees, appropriate notice will be given so that customers can plan for those increases. At this point, we would not anticipate increasing the overall cost of a 2,300 square foot new single family project by more than \$240, which will keep the rates comparable to Escambia County.

Based on the current fee schedules for the tri-county area, the total cost of permits for a 2,300 square foot new single family home is 25 percent less than Escambia County and 55 percent less than Okaloosa County. Until recently, staff has been able to meet the following standards:

- Faxed permits within 24 hours
- Next day inspections
- Permits for simple residential projects while you wait or the next day
- Reviewing residential new construction within seven business days and reviewing most commercial plans within 10 business days.

Development services staff desires to continue to provide the same level of service and continue to meet these standards; however, the reality is that will not be possible at the current staffing levels and fee schedule.

Please provide us with your input on both potential fee increase and on the levels of service you desire. Email your comments and thoughts to sabrinab@santarosa.fl.gov.

Time to Renew

This is a renewal year for all Santa Rosa County competency card holders, active and inactive. Biennial renewals expire on Oct. 31 of every odd year. All active and inactive card holders must renew by Nov. 1. After that date, competency cards not renewed are subject to late fees. Our Milton office will accept renewals between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. If renewing by mail, please send a self-address stamped envelope for the returned competency card. You will need to provide a copy of your current State of Florida Registration and your current Florida Business Tax Receipt. A current certificate of general liability insurance and worker's compensation insurance or exemption must be on file in order to pull permits.

What happens if I don't renew?

It is important for you to know that if you are not going to renew your competency card, you should strongly consider placing the card in an inactive status. The cost to inactive your competency card is \$75 and this fee inactivates your competency card for two years. You can inactivate your card for three consecutive renewal periods for a total of six years.

If you do not renew or inactivate your competency card, you run the risk of having to retest for both your trade and business and law. Retesting is much more expensive than inactivation. The Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation will issue your Registered Contractor's License only if you carry a current competency card from your local jurisdiction. Failing to have a current competency card may jeopardize your "active" status with the State of Florida.

A person is not required to complete any continuing education requirements while his or her license is in an inactive status. However, registrants and certificateholders who change licensure status from inactive to active must show proof of completion of 14 hours of continuing education as required for active renewal for the biennium previous to the requested license activation.

If you have any questions regarding inactivation or licensing in general, please call (850) 981-7000 and speak with one of our permit technicians.

Recently Approved Development Orders - April 1 to July 31

- Nash Plaza, commercial retail, 4583 Watkins St., Pace
- Lost Island Trading Company, retail, 8228 Gulf Blvd., Navarre Beach
- Sharkbite of Navarre Beach, itinerant vendor, 8228 Gulf Blvd., Navarre Beach
- Apostolic Lighthouse of Navarre, place of worship, 8109 East Bay Blvd., Navarre
- Chavers' Rock Yard, retail, 5254 Gulf Breeze Pkwy., Gulf Breeze
- Monte's Country Cajun Cookin', itinerant vendor, 8671 Navarre Pkwy., Navarre
- Holley Navarre Water System- Warehouse #2, warehouse, 8575 Turkey Bluff Rd., Navarre
- Santa Rosa County Creek Indian Tribe, restrooms & parking lot, 4750 Willard Norris Rd., Milton



Check out our [Map Story](#) of these projects

Recently Approved Certificates of Occupancy

- Tiger Point Storage, addition mini-warehouse, COC- \$90,000, 4310 Gulf Breeze Pkwy, Bldg D, Gulf Breeze
- Tropical Smoothie, addition to existing building, COC-\$102,265, 211 Gulf Breeze., Gulf Breeze
- Wal-mart Liquor Box, addition mercantile, COC-\$771,548, 4 963 Highway 90, Pace,
- Tom Thumb, interior renovation, COC-\$50,000, 8215 Highway 87 S, Milton
- Beach Colony East, interior renovation, COC-\$352,251, 8515 Gulf Blvd., Navarre Beach
- Winn Dixie, interior renovation, COC-\$800,000, 3319 Gulf Breeze Pkwy., Gulf Breeze
- Santa Rosa County, interior renovation, COC -\$149,500, 5840 Gulf Breeze Pkwy., Gulf Breeze
- Robbins Bluiders Office Park Phase II, interior renovation, COC- \$30,000, 4645 Gulf Breeze Pkwy., Unit G, Gulf Breeze
- American Mattress Store, interior renovation, COC- \$50,000, 8195 Navarre Pkwy., Navarre
- Dollar Tree #8788, interior renovation, COC-\$103,487, 3719 Gulf Breeze Pkwy., Gulf Breeze
- Jersey Mikes, interior renovation, COC-\$120,000, 8191 Navarre Pkwy., Navarre
- Papa Murphys Pizza, interior renovation, COC-\$130,000, 4869 Highway 90
- Bealls Outlet, interior renovation, COC- \$198,000, 6546 Caroline St., Milton
- Navy Federal Credit Union, interior renovation, COC-\$300,000, 1153 Gulf Breeze Plwy., Suite A, Gulf Breeze
- C & S Signs, new warehouse, COC-\$100,000, 8895 S Lynn Rd., Milton
- Living Truth Church, new church community hall, COC-\$100,000, 8897 Byrom Campbell Rd., Bldg 1, Pace
- Family Dollar, new mercantile, COC-\$400,000, 5397 Stewart St., Milton
- McDonalds, new restaurant, COC- \$824,102, 5004 Highway 90, Pace
- Culvers, new restaurant, COC- \$800,000, 3319 Gulf Breeze Pkwy., Gulf Breeze

New App Coming Soon!

Staff has been working over the last few months to create GoContractor, a mobile inspection application, or app, and hope to roll it out for testing by September. This program will be designed to fit mobile devices and will allow contractors to schedule inspections, check the results of inspections, check escrow balances and view all permits issued to their license.

If you would like to provide input for the upcoming application, please contact Sabrina Brown at sabrinab@santarosa.fl.gov or 850-981-7057 to share your thoughts.

