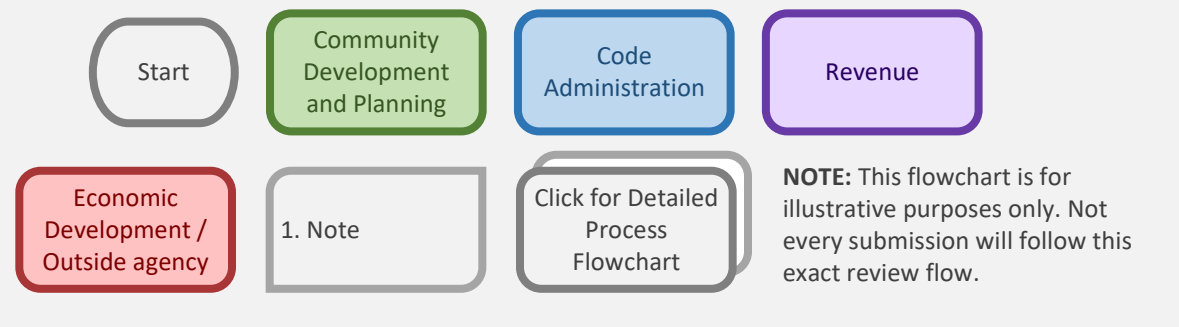




Business License Flowchart
Commercial Development (No Site Plan Required) Flowchart
Updated 9/15/2025

Symbol Key



See accompanying Business License Checklist [here](#)

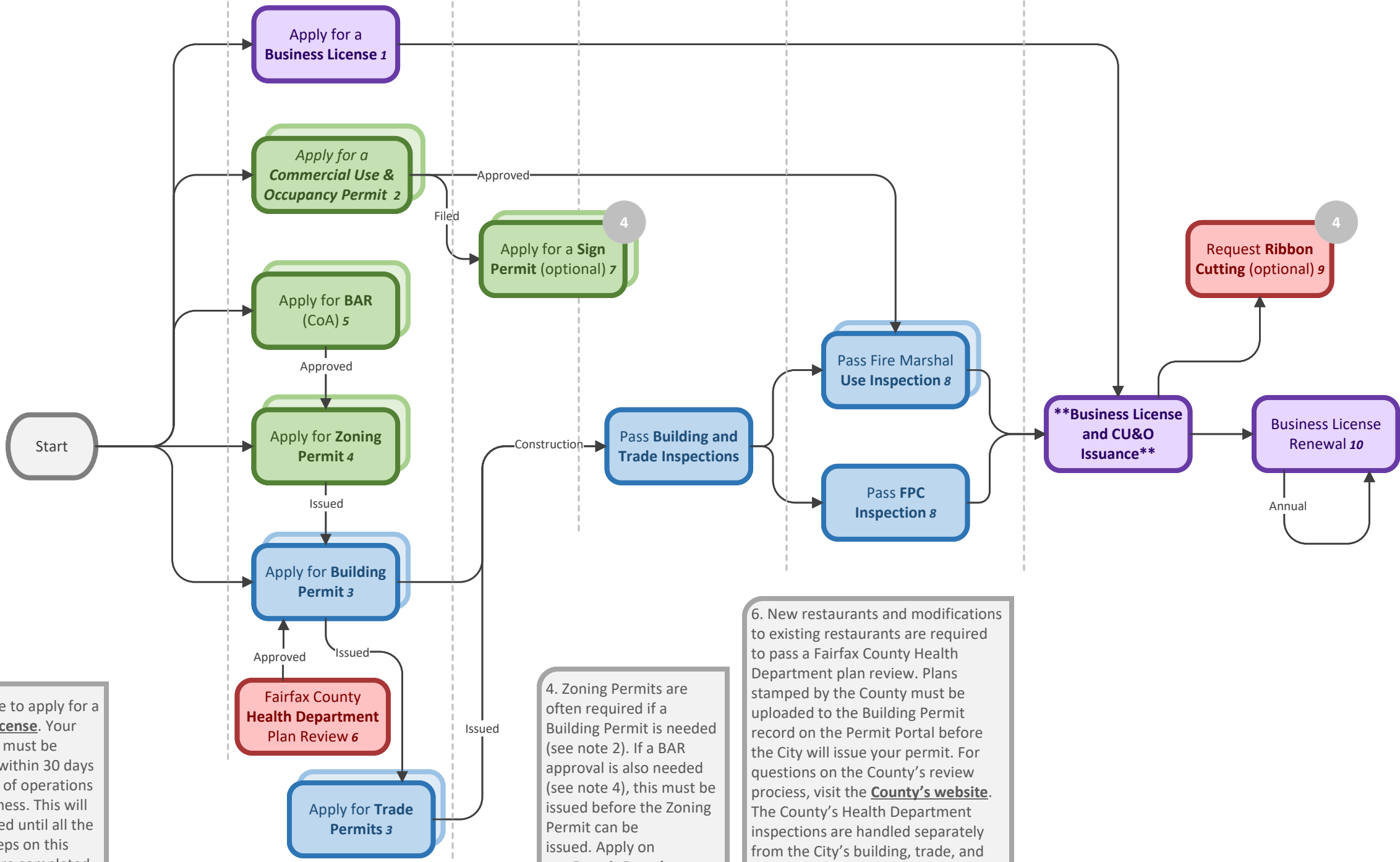
Checklist Step #

1

2

3

4



1. Click here to apply for a **Business License**. Your application must be submitted within 30 days of the start of operations of the business. This will not be issued until all the relevant steps on this flowchart are completed.

2. Commercial Use & Occupancy Permits are required for most commercial and retail business uses. Minor Home Occupations, such as home-based business offices, home-based commercial kitchens, or limited student instruction require a type of Zoning Permit called a Residential Accessory Use Permit. Applied for this in the [Permit Portal](#). More intensive home-based businesses may require a Special Use Permit. For more information, contact Zoning at 703-385-7930. In-home daycare uses have a distinct set of requirements. There are separate flowcharts for those dependent on the number of children: [4 or fewer children](#) or [5-12 children](#).

3. Building and Trade Permits are needed if there is construction needed to your business, and/or if there is a change of use. Zoning Permits (see note 3) must be approved before a Building Permit can be issued. Apply on our [Permit Portal](#).

4. Zoning Permits are often required if a Building Permit is needed (see note 2). If a BAR approval is also needed (see note 4), this must be issued before the Zoning Permit can be issued. Apply on our [Permit Portal](#).

5. BAR review, resulting in issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness, is required for improvements visible from public places (e.g. roads, parks, plazas, etc.), as well as for signs in the Historic or Transition Overlay Districts. See [Zoning Map](#) for the boundaries of the Overlay Districts.

6. New restaurants and modifications to existing restaurants are required to pass a Fairfax County Health Department plan review. Plans stamped by the County must be uploaded to the Building Permit record on the Permit Portal before the City will issue your permit. For questions on the County's review process, visit the [County's website](#). The County's Health Department inspections are handled separately from the City's building, trade, and Fire Marshal Inspections.

7. Once you have filed your CU&O application, you are welcome to submit a Sign Permit application on our [Permit Portal](#). Sign permits are required for a variety of permanent signs including but not limited to wall signs, window signs, hanging signs, and monument signs.

8. You will be contacted directly by Code Administration if FPC or Use inspections are needed. For more information on when these inspections are required, visit our [Inspections Info page](#).

9. Contact Fairfax City Economic Development to request a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony once you have your Business License. [Apply online here](#). Email contact@fairfaxcityecond ev.org for more info.

10. Existing businesses must file an annual license renewal and pay the BPOL tax by March 1. File your renewal at the [Business License Portal](#).