



# Development Permit

Guidelines for the development permit application process in the City of Abbotsford  
**November 2014**



## PLANNING SERVICES

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## **DEVELOPMENT PERMITS**

### **What are Development Permits?**

Development Permits allow the City to achieve policies with respect to the form and character of multi-family, commercial and industrial development and to protect agricultural and environmental areas of Abbotsford.

A Development Permit for a proposed project is approved and issued when the Director of Development Planning is satisfied that the project meets all guidelines and policies contained within the Development Permit Guidelines, contained within the Official Community Plan (OCP). The conditions of the Development Permit are binding on existing and future owners of the property. You still need to apply for a Building Permit before you can build.

### **When is a Development Permit required?**

You must apply for a Development Permit in the following cases:

- all new multiple and commercial developments;
- all new industrial developments;
- certain projects adjacent to the Agricultural Land Reserve;
- additions to multi-family, commercial and industrial buildings; and
- significant changes to the exterior of multi-family, commercial or industrial buildings.

Planning & Development Services staff will be able to assist you in determining whether or not a Development Permit is required for your project.

### **The Development Permit Application Process**

The major stages in the Development Permit application process are briefly explained in the following section.

- **Submit an Application**
- **Application Review**
- **Report to Director of Development Planning**
- **Development Permit Approval & Issuance**

Your development proposal should be well planned before submitting an application. In preparing your proposal you should be aware of the City plans, policies and regulations that may apply to your property. Procedures can be complex - you should consider hiring a professional consultant.

- **Official Community Plan - Development Permit Areas and Guidelines**  
Identify the type of Development Permit area your property is located within - commercial, industrial, multiple residential or agricultural. The Official Community Plan contains specific guidelines that apply to all development within each type of area. Development Permit Area maps and guidelines are available for viewing at the Planning and Development Department.
- **Official Community Plan - Land Use Designations**  
The Official Community Plan sets out, or designates, the types of land use intended for all areas of Abbotsford. Check the map for the designation of your property and the types of land uses allowed within that designation. The Plan also contains policies relating to the specific types of development. Copies of the policies are maps are available at the Planning & Development Services Department.
- **Zoning Maps and the Zoning Bylaw**  
Each property in Abbotsford is subject to specific zoning regulations that apply in addition to any Development Permit guidelines. Check the zoning maps and the Zoning Bylaw to find the zoning category and zoning requirements for your property. It is possible that the existing zoning will not allow your project. You must then consider the possibility of rezoning your property (see our brochure titled, "*Rezoning Guidelines*").
- **Engineering Services**  
All developments must provide adequate sewer, water and other services at the developer's cost. Check whether the required services are available or whether additional servicing is needed for your development. Information on existing services is available at the Engineering Department.

### **Submit an Application**

Once you have prepared your proposal, you can submit a Development Permit application form and pay the application fee. Application forms and fee schedule are available at the Planning Services Division (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall) or online at [www.abbotsford.ca/devapplications](http://www.abbotsford.ca/devapplications). Planning staff will assist you but you must provide the following:

- completed Development Application Form;
- application Fees;
- title search(es) of subject property(ies) retrieved within the last 30 days;
- copies of any covenants, easements and rights-of-way registered on title;

- the property owner's name and contact information. If someone is applying on behalf of the property of the owner, a *Letter of Authorization* must be signed by all property owner(s) and submitted with the development permit application. A standard *Letter of Authorization* is part of the application form. You must also indicate to whom all correspondence shall be sent. Staff will only deal with the applicant;
- a *Letter of Intent* outlining the proposal in full (background including justification/rationale); and
- a *Site Profile Questionnaire* to determine if the site requires a Site Profile review.

Plans, including building elevations, site layout, landscaping and context plan, must be submitted along with the Development Application Form. A complete list of requirements can be found in the application form. Processing of your application cannot begin until these plans are submitted.

### **Application Review**

Your application is assigned to a City Planner for review of development permit guidelines and other zoning and development requirements. Following this initial review, your planner will contact you to inform you of the status of your application. The planner may ask for clarification, further information or plan revisions if your proposal does not meet the required standards. Additional information required may include, but is not limited to, lot grading and topographic information, detailed building design and landscaping plans, tree surveys, survey plans and legal documents such as Restrictive Covenants. The application review may involve other City departments and, in some cases, outside agencies.

### **Report to Director of Planning**

After your proposal is reviewed, staff will prepare a report to the Director of Development Planning recommending that the Development Permit (DP) be approved in principle. Staff forward the draft DP requesting written acceptance of the terms/conditions of the DP in accordance with the Development Application Procedures Bylaw No. 830-99.

### **Development Permit Approval & Issuance**

Once all conditions of issuance have been addressed, staff will issue the Development Permit and a copy will be sent to you. The City will register the Development Permit with the Land Title Office. The title of the property will then carry a notice stating that a Development Permit applies to the property.

The Development Permit also states that the Development Permit will lapse if construction does not substantially commence within 2 years of the Development Permit issuance date. After this two year period you must submit a new Development Permit application and repeat the Development Permit application process.

**NOTE: If you propose variances** to Abbotsford Zoning bylaw No. 2400-2014, those will need to be reviewed and approved by Council, in accordance with the provisions contained within the *Local Government Act*.

**NOTE: If you are submitting a Development Permit application in addition to a Rezoning or Subdivision Application**, the same Development Permit application process applies; however, Council cannot approve and issue the Development Permit until the rezoning has been given final approval. If you are also applying for subdivision, the servicing agreement must be in place before the Development Permit can be issued.

## 10 Points to Remember

1. Familiarize yourself with the review process.
2. Submit a complete application with accurate information.
3. Keep a record of your file number and quote it whenever you contact us.
4. Keep in mind that it may take several weeks or months to complete your application, depending on the complexity of the project. Please be patient with the staff.
5. Keep a record of approvals, correspondence and decisions from meetings.
6. Minimalize deviations from established development policies or standards. Remember that the more your proposal differs from established policy or standards, the more time it will take to process.
7. Do your part and do it on time. If a proposal needs to be revised in order to meet City policies or standards, you should be flexible.
8. Check with your planner on whether you should contact outside agencies regarding your application.
9. Remember that, in more cases, City Council will decide whether to approve your application. Planning staff can only make recommendations to Council.
10. Be patient. All applications are dealt with on a “first com/first served” basis. There will be several hundred applications ahead of yours, and limited staff to process them. To be fair to everyone, we ask that you help us by following the above points and by being patient.

## Questions?

We are here to help make the Development Permit Application process as smooth as possible. If you have questions, please contact us.

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