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What are Development Permits?

The *Local Government Act* permits local governments to identify locations that require special treatment for certain purposes, such as protecting the natural environment, or establishing guidelines to shape the form and character (the “look”) of future development. These designated areas are known as Development Permit Areas.

Each Development Permit Area is accompanied by a set of guidelines that assist property owners to understand how their proposed method of redevelopment can address the special conditions or objectives defined for their area. These are known as Development Permit Area Guidelines.

Development Permits, consequently, are statutory tools that the City uses to ensure that proposed development is consistent with the Development Permit Area Guidelines associated with a particular Area.

There are two distinct types of Development Permit Areas outlined in the White Rock Official Community Plan (OCP):

- Form, Character, and Sustainability Development Permit Areas; and
- Environmental Development Permit Areas

These development permit areas (DPAs) are generally described below:

Questions?

Planning
 Phone: 604-541-2136
 E-mail: planning@whiterockcity.ca

Form, Character, and Sustainability DPAs are the City’s method of establishing objectives and guidelines for the form and character of commercial, multi-family, and residential development, and to promote sustainable development through the reduction of greenhouse gases, and energy and water conservation.

There are seven (7) Form, Character, and Sustainability DPAs in the City, each contemplating and regulating specific types and scales of development:

- Town Centre DPA – large-scale mixed use and apartment
- Lower Town Centre DPA – moderate-scale mixed-use and apartment
- Waterfront DPA – small-scale mixed-use and apartment
- Multi-Family DPA – mixed-use, apartment, townhouse, and intensive assisted living use (varying scales)
- Neighbourhood Commercial DPA – small-scale commercial and mixed-use buildings
- East Side Large Lot Infill DPA – mixed-use, apartment, townhouse, and intensive single family infill (varying scale)
- Mature Neighbourhood Infill DPA– duplexes, triplexes, and intensive single family infill

Form, Character, and Sustainability DPAs

To learn more about Form, Character, and Sustainability DPAs and their associated guidelines, please review the following sections of the OCP:

- Section 22.0 – Form, Character, and Sustainability Development Permit Areas
- Schedule B: Form, Character and Sustainability Development Permit Areas Map

Single-family infill subdivisions created through rezoning and subdivision, where the lot width is less than 12.1 metres, are defined as ‘intensive residential redevelopment’. The Mature Neighbourhood Infill DPA guidelines are applicable to these properties.

All lands zoned to permit and proposed to be developed for assisted living use are defined as “intensive residential development”. The Multi-Family DPA guidelines apply to these properties.

Environmental DPAs designate areas of the City as having special conditions and requirements for development regarding the protection of the natural environment, local ecosystems, and biological diversity in the City of White Rock. They are also used to regulate development in potentially hazardous lands.

There are three (3) Environmental DPAs in the City.

The following site conditions are contemplated and considered in each Environmental DPA:

- Floodplain DPA – to minimize risk and damage in areas identified as having potential flood hazards
- Ravine Lands and Significant Trees DPA – to ensure the protection of healthy, mature stands of trees
- Watercourses DPA – to protect and enhance riparian areas adjacent to streams and watercourses

Environmental DPAs
<p>Environmental DPAs and their associated guidelines are provided in the following sections of the OCP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 23.0 – Environmental Development Permit Areas • Schedule C: Environmental Development Permit Areas Map

When is a Development Permit required?

Within a development permit area, a property owner must obtain a development permit before subdividing land, or constructing, adding to, or altering a building.

Please contact Planning staff if you have any questions regarding whether or not your proposal will trigger the requirement for a development permit application. For the purpose of general reference, the following table lists a number of activities that are exempt from the development permit approval process.

Development Permit Exemption List	
Form, Character, and Sustainability DPAs Only	Environmental DPAs Only
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-family development that does not meet the definition of “intensive residential development” • Proposals where the intended use is wholly limited to institutional, utility and/or civic uses • Interior alterations and/or renovations with no changes to the exterior appearance or design • Building envelope remediation so long as there are no changes to exterior appearance or design • In-kind replacements of missing, worn, or damaged materials, so long as there are no changes to the exterior design or appearance • Alterations to a facade that result in only minor changes to the form and character of the building • Applications for individual signs only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repairs and renovations to existing buildings and structures on existing foundations that involve no changes to the footprint of the building or structure. • Existing approved developments, including previously approved Development Permits or variances, still in effect that were approved prior to the adoption of these policies. Modifications may necessitate a new application. • The construction, repair and maintenance of public works and services by the City or its authorized agents and contractors (excluding riparian areas). • Within the Floodplain DPA, developments that meet the specific exemption requirements Note: See OCP Section 23.2 for details. • Emergency actions for hazards and utility repairs • Re-establishment of the Streamside Protection and Enhancement Area by planting native vegetation. Note: Removal of invasive non-native vegetation may necessitate approval from the City.

What type of Development Permit will I need for my proposal?

In addition to the two types of Development Permit Areas, there are also two kinds of Development Permits defined in the White Rock Planning Procedures Bylaw: **Minor Development Permits** and **Major Development Permits**.

The distinction between these types of development permits are provided below:

Minor Development Permits	Major Development Permits
<p>A Minor Development Permit is a development permit for the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An amendment to a development permit where no variance is required • A commercial development permit limited to minor facade improvements or signage, that does not involve reconstruction or expansion of the existing building footprint of floor area • A development permit in respect of natural resource preservation, environmental development, or protection from hazardous conditions (e.g: demolition or construction within an Environmental (Watercourses) DPA) • A residential development permit for a duplex or triplex <p>Minor Development Permits are approved by the Chief Administrative Officer. Every development permit application that involves the form and character of a new development will likely require presentation before the Advisory Design Panel.</p> <p>The Minor Development Permit process is generally summarized on page 4 of this guide.</p>	<p>A Major Development Permit refers to any Development Permit that does not qualify as a Minor Development Permit.</p> <p>For full clarity, this primarily refers to the following types of development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All new developments proposals that meet the contemplated scale and typology within a designated Form, Character, and Sustainability Development Permit Area (such as multi-unit residential and commercial development) • Development permits that require concurrent approval of variances to City bylaws • Development that meets the OCP's definition of "assisted living use" • Development that meets the OCP's definition of "intensive single family infill" <p>Major Development Permits are approved by City Council. Every development permit application that involves the form and character of a new development will likely require presentation before the Advisory Design Panel.</p> <p>The Major Development Permit process is generally summarized on page 5 and 6 of this guide.</p>

Quick Tips for Development Permits

- All development proposals submitted to the City are required to comprehensively and credibly identify how the proposal facilitates or inhibits the realization of the vision, principles, and goals of the OCP in report form.
- Ask staff for a copy of the relevant Development Permit Area Guidelines Response Table applicable to your area early on. It will help ensure that you have a strong rationale built with the relevant guidelines in mind.
- Check if [Council Policy 511: Bonus Density and Amenity Contribution](#) or [Council Policy 514: Tenant Relocation](#) applies to your proposal.
- All development permit applications within the Town Centre Area (south of North Bluff Road / 16 Avenue, west of George Street, north of Thrift Avenue, and east of Martin Street) should be in accordance with the Town Centre Urban Design Plan and Guidelines. Please see the FAQ for more information.

What is the Minor Development Permit process?

The Minor Development Permit process is generally summarized below. For more specific procedural information, please see the White Rock Planning Procedures Bylaw, 2017, No. 2234:

Step 1: Pre-Application Meeting	Step 2: Application Submission
<p>It is strongly recommended that you arrange a meeting with Planning staff at City Hall to discuss your proposal prior to application submission.</p> <p>A summary of the proposal, including any applicable plans and proposed site statistics, should be provided to staff prior to the scheduled pre-application meeting.</p> <p>Staff will be able to advise you on various aspects of your proposed development, including commentary on site characteristics and details on relevant City bylaws, policies, and other related plans.</p> <p>You will also be able to confirm your submission requirements with staff after this meeting.</p>	<p>The Land Use Development Application Form, along with the accompanying Submission Requirement Form(s), can be located on the Planning Resources & Documents section of the website. Application fees are summarized in the City's Summary of Development Application Fees.</p> <p>Prior to making application with the City of White Rock, please confirm with staff as to whether there will be any additional requirements for your application prior to formal submission. Staff will only accept a full and complete application at time of submission.</p> <p>If your proposal requires multiple application types, they may be submitted and processed concurrently. Please contact staff for more information.</p>

Step 3: Internal Review and Circulation	Step 4: Advisory Design Panel (ADP) (Form, Character, and Sustainability DPAs only)
<p>Once your application has been received by the Planning Department, it will be assigned to a File Manager who will guide you through the application process.</p> <p>Once the File Manager has reviewed your application for completeness, the application will then be circulated for comment by other City departments and external agencies as required. Planning staff will also provide their own review of the proposal.</p> <p>During this time, staff may request plan revisions, clarification, or additional information for the proposal.</p>	<p><i>*Note: This step is only required for applications that require minor development permits that guide the form, character, and sustainability of development.</i></p> <p>The Advisory Design Panel is a volunteer committee that evaluates, analyzes, and assesses the architectural and landscape designs of various development proposals.</p> <p>Recommendations and comments from the ADP may necessitate modification to the proposal.</p> <p>Learn more about the ADP process on our website.</p>

Step 5: Director and CAO Review
<p>Once staff have completed their review of the application, staff will prepare and present a report, along with any associated materials, to the Director of Planning and the Director of Engineering & Municipal Operations.</p> <p>The follow-up report, along with recommendations, will then be presented before the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) for consideration. The CAO will move forward with one of three options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the issuance of the minor development permit 2. To defer the application back to staff for further revision and modification; or 3. Reject the issuance of the minor development permit

What is the Major Development Permit process?

The Major Development Permit process is generally summarized below. For more specific procedural information, please see the White Rock Planning Procedures Bylaw, 2017, No. 2234:

<p>Step 1: Pre-Application Meeting</p>	<p>Step 2: Application Submission</p>
<p>It is strongly recommended that you arrange a meeting with Planning staff at City Hall to discuss your proposal prior to application submission.</p> <p>A summary of the proposal, including any applicable plans and proposed site statistics, should be provided to staff prior to the scheduled pre-application meeting.</p> <p>Staff will be able to advise you on various aspects of your proposed development, including commentary on site characteristics and details on relevant City bylaws, policies, and other related plans.</p> <p>You will also be able to confirm your submission requirements with staff after this meeting.</p>	<p>The Land Use Development Application Form, along with the accompanying Submission Requirement Form(s), can be located on the Planning Resources & Documents section of the website. Application fees are summarized in the City's Summary of Development Application Fees.</p> <p>Prior to making application with the City of White Rock, please confirm with staff as to whether there will be any additional requirements for your application prior to formal submission. Staff will only accept a full and complete application at time of submission.</p> <p>If your proposal requires multiple application types, they may be submitted and processed concurrently. Please contact staff for more information.</p>
<p>Step 3: Internal Review and Circulation</p>	<p>Step 4: Development Proposal Sign</p>
<p>Once your application has been received by the Planning Department, it will be assigned to a File Manager who will guide you through the application process.</p> <p>Once the File Manager has reviewed your application for completeness, the application will then be circulated for comment by other City departments and external agencies as required. Planning staff will also provide their own review of the proposal.</p> <p>During this time, staff may request plan revisions, clarification, or additional information for the proposal.</p>	<p>Shortly after application submission, your file manager will prepare a Development Proposal Sign for installation on the subject property.</p> <p>This sign must be prepared and installed in accordance with Section 36 and Schedule F of the White Rock Planning Procedures Bylaw.</p> <p>This signage must be posted no later than 14 days following application submission, and must be removed within 10 days following either Public Meeting completion, or withdrawal/rejection of the application.</p>
<p>Step 5: Public Information Meeting (PIM)</p>	<p>Step 6: Advisory Design Panel (ADP)</p>
<p>Major Development Permit applications require applicants to present their proposals to the public in an open house in order to discuss and answer any questions related to the proposal.</p> <p>The purpose of the PIM is to obtain input from local residents and business owners regarding potential issues or concerns to be addressed early in the approvals process.</p> <p>Please check out our Public Information Meeting Guide to learn more.</p>	<p>The Advisory Design Panel is a volunteer committee that evaluates, analyzes, and assesses the architectural and landscape designs of various development proposals. Proposal presentation before and review by the ADP is required for Major Development Permit applications.</p> <p>Recommendations and comments from the ADP may necessitate modification to the proposal.</p> <p>Learn more about the ADP process on our website.</p>

Step 7: Land Use and Planning Committee	Step 8: Council Consideration
<p>The Land Use and Planning Committee (LUPC) reviews matters related to land use policy and development. Development proposals are typically presented in report form to the LUPC under two circumstances:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide the LUPC with a preliminary information report on the proposal; or 2. To provide the LUPC with recommendations and options on a proposal for consideration by Council once all other steps are complete. <p>An applicant may speak or present on their application at an LUPC meeting. In the second case, the decisions of the LUPC are presented to Council for consideration.</p>	<p>Following discussion of the proposal, Council will typically move forward with one of the following four options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If variance to a City bylaw is not required, approve the issuance of the major development permit <p>The applicant will need to address all outstanding applicable City requirements (including servicing, outstanding payments, and registration of legal documentation) prior to issuance.</p> <p>Any other required development approvals, including concurrent applications, will need to be prepared and be ready for consideration at this time.</p> <p>If approved, staff will register a Notice of Permit on title with the Land Title Office.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. If variance to a City bylaw is required, direct staff to schedule a Public Meeting (see: steps 9 and 10); 3. To defer the application back to staff for further revision and modification; or 4. Reject the issuance of the major development permit

Step 9: Public Meeting (If Variance Required)	Step 10: Council Reconsideration (If Variance Required)
<p>A public meeting is a hearing conducted by City Council where the applicant and the public are given an opportunity to comment on the proposal prior to reconsideration.</p> <p>Comments may be provided to Council either in writing prior to or during the hearing, or verbally during the hearing when the bylaw is presented.</p> <p>No further information can be received from the applicant or the public once the Public Meeting is concluded.</p> <p>Notice will be mailed to all neighbours within 100 metres of the site at least ten days before the Public Meeting.</p>	<p>After the Public Meeting, Council will consider the application for a second time.</p> <p>If the application receives sufficient support from Council, then the applicant will need to address all outstanding applicable City requirements (including servicing, outstanding payments, and registration of legal documentation) prior to issuance.</p> <p>Any other required development approvals, including concurrent applications, will need to be prepared and be ready for consideration at this time.</p> <p>If approved, staff will register a Notice of Permit on title with the Land Title Office.</p>

Frequently Asked Questions

My proposal is located within the Town Centre Area (west of George Street, north of Thrift Avenue, east of Martin Street, and south of North Bluff Road / 16 Avenue). What do I need to know about the Town Centre Urban Design Plan and Guidelines?

Drafted in 2011, Town Centre Urban Design Plan and the accompanying Guidelines were created to guide and regulate future development within the Town Centre over the next 25 years. The contents of these documents formed the foundation of the Town Centre chapter and the Town Centre Development Permit Area guidelines contained within the White Rock Official Community Plan.

[Town Centre Urban Design Plan](#)

The overall purpose of the Town Centre Urban Design Plan (the “Plan”) is to develop a long-term vision for the Town Centre that will result in mixed commercial/residential growth and a healthy business environment. The Plan is expected to be implemented on an incremental basis, as and when various properties are assembled and/or redeveloped.

[Town Centre Urban Design Guidelines](#)

The Town Centre Urban Design Guidelines (the “Guidelines”), however, provide specific guidance and detail regarding the design of new private and public building developments (the “built form”), and new public realm improvements (such as streetscape works, public open space, parks, and other features). These guidelines shall be applied when designing, reviewing, and approving all projects within the White Rock Town Centre area.

To summarize: while both documents should be read in tandem, the Plan is the ‘general roadmap’, while the Guidelines constitute the ‘design blueprint’. Wherever possible, the contents of these plans should be considered and implemented in any development proposal application located within the Town Centre.

Will my development permit application be approved if I apply?

Staff cannot comment on or guarantee the future approval or refusal of any particular project as every development application is subject to professional review.

How long will my development permit application take?

Processing times for development permit applications vary depending on the complexity of the development, especially when the processing of other applications types (such as zoning amendments) are required.

Can my development permit application be processed concurrently with other types of development applications?

Yes.

Where more than one type of development approval is needed for one project, other application types (such as zoning amendments or development variance permits) may be submitted jointly and may go through the application process concurrently. Please contact Planning for more information.

Will my development permit expire?

The development permit will lapse if construction related to the relevant permit is not substantially started within 2 years after the issuance date.