

# P-Patch Community Gardening Program

## Permitting

TIP

PP202

7/31/17

*P-Patch TIPS are reference documents that address topics related to the development and ongoing management of P-Patch Community Gardens.*

There are a variety of city permits that may be necessary before you start building your new community garden. The number and type of permits will depend on many factors, including the size, location, and topography of the site. Below is a brief summary of the most common permitting requirements for P-Patch community gardens. Be sure to work with your landscape architect and program staff person to identify all the specific permits for your location.

### Do you need Land Use or Building permits?

You will need to assess this based on your zoning, terrain, vegetation, water availability and design. Community gardens are allowed as a primary use in all zones, but are restricted to rooftops and sides of buildings in *Manufacturing and Industrial Centers* zones. Different zones also have different setback requirements which will affect where you site any structures, such as the shed. Even if you do not need a permit, you must design any structures size, height and setback according to the property's zoning and comprehensive plan designation.

For general information on Department of Planning and Development (DPD) codes for Urban Agriculture refer to [Client Assistance Memo \(CAM\) 244](#)

### What is the zoning of the garden property?

Current zoning information on Seattle properties and neighborhoods is accessible through DPD's [online GIS tool](#) where you can build, view and print map displays using online Seattle GIS data. It includes an integrated property research tool. Other property research tools are available through DPD's Research page. Learn about required setbacks and other information about the zoning through the [Zoning Classifications](#) guide.



*Major grading work at Hazel Heights*

### Is it a Environmentally Critical Area (ECA)?

Check early on to determine if there is any part of the land that is determined by Department of Planning and Development (DPD) to be an Environmentally Critical Area (ECA). [DPD TIPS](#)

ECAs include landslide-prone areas, steep slopes, wetlands, riparian corridors, shoreline habitat, and other protected areas. Development is generally not allowed in these areas without mitigation and/or additional permitting requirements. In some cases, small projects may be waived or exempted. To find out if your site is in an ECA use the DPD [online GIS tool](#). If your site is an ECA, refer to DPD's ECA-related [Building Code CAMs](#) (325-331) for permitting and mitigation requirements.

You can look up this and other information about the site on DPD's online GIS at <http://web1.seattle.gov/dpd/maps/dpdgis.aspx>. Clicking on the aerial view can be very helpful. Select from the menu of information on the left to display. The P-Patch staff will help you assess the appropriate permitting needed.



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P-Patch TIPS should not be used as a substitute for codes, regulations, or rule requirements. Individuals are responsible for compliance with all code, regulatory, and rule requirements, whether or not described in this TIP.

## Change of Use

When creating a new P-Patch, a Change of Use permit may be required. This permit establishes the property's use as a P-Patch community garden. Generally, any new P-Patch on private property will need to establish the use. P-Patches on public property may also need to establish a use particularly if the P-Patch will constitute the sole or primary use of the property. Existing P-Patches that are undertaking new projects or renovations that will require any building or grading permits may also require a Change of Use permit.

The size of the property, any Environmentally Critical Areas on the site, and the complexity of project will determine the expense and length of time needed to obtain the Change of Use permit. You should factor in the additional time and costs when applying for funding for your project. Change of Use permits are obtained by application from DPD. All new gardens and existing gardens taking on projects that will require building permits should first check in with P-Patch staff to find out what is required for your project.

## Will you be doing any Grading?

When the existing grade of the site is altered by filling, excavating or moving earth materials, a grading permit may be required. The thresholds that determine if a permit is required are based on factors such as area of surface disturbed, volume of soils moved, and steepness of slopes. Please refer to DPD's [TIP 502](#).

## Are there any large trees present?

Certain trees are protected by code in the city of Seattle. Permits may be required if you need to remove a tree. Please see DPD's [Tree Protection Regulations CAM](#) for more detailed information on tree removal.

## Permits for Irrigation Systems

There are a number of permits related to irrigation at a P-Patch community garden. Please refer to the *Irrigation Systems TIP 203* for more information.

## Arbors, Fences, Entries

Generally do not need permitting but there are some footprint, location and height restrictions that do apply. Refer to [DPD Tip 312](#) for more specific information.

## Building Permits

If you plan on building any structures in your garden, such as a shed, it may need permits depending on the size and shape and if it is in an ECA. For more information about building permits refer to the [Sheds](#)

## Signage, Kiosks, Bulletin Boards

Signage rules depend on the zone the garden is in. Step 1 is to find out your zoning and then check the code at: <http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/toc/23-55.htm>



Interbay's shed needed a permit



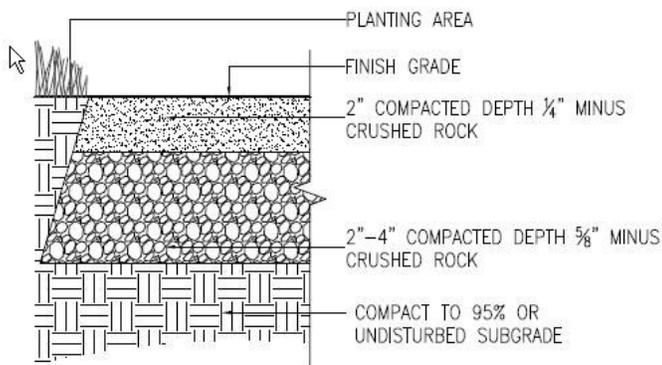
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## Additional Resources

- **Urban Agriculture CAM 244:**  
<http://www.seattle.gov/DPD/PublicationsCAM/cam244.pdf>
- **Zoning Information:**  
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/codesrules/codes/zoning/>
- **Tree Protection Regulations:**  
<http://web1.seattle.gov/DPD/CAMsCamDetail.aspx?cn=242>
- **Environmentally Critical Areas**  
<http://web6.seattle.gov/DPD/CAMS/CamDetail.aspx?cn=208>
- **SEPA MUP page**  
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/permits/permittypes/landusesepa/default.htm>
- **DPD Change of Use Page**  
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/permits/permittypes/constructionestablishinguse/default.htm>



1 CRUSHED ROCK PATH SECTION  
SCALE: 3"=1'-0"

## Other Department Tip sheets that might be needed in P-Patch's

### Plants and other gardening

- ◆ DPD Tip 244: Urban Agriculture
- ◆ SDOT Tip 2305: Gardening in Planting Strips
- ◆ SDOT Tip 2302: Tree Pruning or Removal Permits
- ◆ SDOT Tip 2300: Street Tree Planting Procedures
- ◆ Tip 532: Green Stormwater Infrastructure: Rain Gardens
- ◆ Tip 534: Tree Planting and Retention for Flow Control Credit
- ◆ DPD Tip 242: Tree Protection Regulations in Seattle

### Environmental Reviews

- ◆ DPD Tip 208: When Environmental Review is Required in Seattle
- ◆ DPD Tip 327B: Environmentally Critical Areas-Small Project Waivers
- ◆ DPD Tip 328: Environmentally Critical Areas Exceptions
- ◆ DPD Tip 201: Master Use Permit

### Utilities

- ◆ SDOT Tip 2602: Becoming a Registered Pavement Restoration Contractor
- ◆ DPD Tip 2601: Pavement Restoration for Utility Service Connections
- ◆ Tip 520: Rainwater Harvesting for Beneficial Use
- ◆ SPU Tip 1202 Water Service Application

### Construction

- ◆ Tip 312: Decks, Fences, and Arbors for Single Family Homes in Seattle
- ◆ DPD Tip 321: Rockeries: Prescriptive Design and Installation Standards
- ◆ SDOT Tip 2208: Sidewalk Maintenance and Repair
- ◆ DPD Tip 533: Permeable Pavement Surfaces and Facilities
- ◆ DPD Tip 502 Grading Regulations in Seattle
- ◆ DPD Tip 119 Regulations for Barrier-Free Accessibility also refer to Tip PP307 Making Gardens Accessible for All
- ◆ SDOT Tip 2506: Painting the Intersection in Your Neighborhood



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