

Procedures, Permitting Process and Approvals for Right-of-Way Improvements

2.1 Navigating the City of Seattle Permit Process

There are numerous permits that the City of Seattle may require for a project being developed that impacts the street right-of-way. A number of City departments oversee permitting, including:

- [Seattle Department of Transportation \(SDOT\)](#) has authority over permits related to any work being performed in Seattle's street right-of-way.
- [Department of Planning and Development \(DPD\)](#) leads and is responsible for Construction and Master Use Permits (MUPs).
- [Seattle Public Utilities \(SPU\)](#) is responsible for approving work that deals with drainage and water infrastructure.
- [Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation \(SPR\)](#) has a series of approvals that are needed when work is proposed on or adjacent to land that they own.
- [Seattle City Light \(SCL\)](#) has authority for overhead and underground electrical facilities in the street right-of-way.
- [Seattle Department of Neighborhoods \(DON\)](#) is responsible for the legal process of nominating, designating and protecting landmark structures and sites. Their overview also includes the historical integrity of structures and public spaces in the City's seven historic districts.
- In addition to City required permits, many projects may require permits or approvals by County, State or Federal agencies.

This section of the Right-of-Way Improvement Manual provides a high-level overview of typical permits that may be needed for work in the street right-of-way. It also includes a worksheet to help the applicant define the specific permits that each type of project is likely to require. As a project gets more specific, it is always necessary to work with a permit specialist at the City to determine the exact set of permits your project will require.

2.1.1 Applying for a Master Use Permit (MUP)



The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) issues Master Use Permits (MUPs) for the City of Seattle. Many types of Land Use approvals are reviewed as part of a MUP, such as:

- platting (subdivision of land);
- departures from Land Use Code development standards (Design Review and variances);
- special approvals for specific uses of land (Conditional Use and Special Exceptions); and,
- reviews under the [State Environmental Policy Act \(SEPA\)](#).

A MUP review may require additional or different street improvements from the improvements typically required by the Land Use Code. For sites which abut multiple rights of way (streets and alleys), the MUP may even specify the location of vehicle access point(s) to the site. For more information on MUPs, visit the [DPD website](#). More information on permits, procedures and approvals for MUPs can be found in [Section 2.7](#)

Master Use Permits (DPD).

2.1.2 Applying for a DPD Construction Permit

Projects that require a DPD Construction Permit may also require street improvements as specified in the Land Use Code or as required by a previous, related MUP.

An applicant may also need one or more SDOT permits depending on the condition of the street right-of-way. If a project requires street improvements, the applicant will seek issuance of an SDOT Street Improvement Permit and will likely need additional SDOT permits to perform construction (e.g., dumpster and materials storage, sidewalk crossing, crane, concrete pumping).

Additional permit types may be required depending on the project type and site conditions that are issued by other agencies. More information on permits, procedures and approvals for Construction Permits can be found in [Section 2.8 Construction Permits](#).

2.1.3 SDOT Street Right-of-Way Permits

The City of Seattle requires an SDOT permit for work in or use of a street right-of-way, or for excavation near, or an opening in a street right-of-way under SDOT's jurisdiction.

There are five basic types of SDOT permits with varying requirements, some of which are considered to be Street Improvement Permits.

Major Street Improvement Permits include the installation of major improvements such as street paving, curbs, or sidewalks as a result of the development on private property such as a multifamily building. Utilities that would be necessary to serve the private property development are also included in the permit.

Over-the-Counter Street Improvement Permits include installation of individual improvements in the right-of-way such as street trees, sidewalks and driveways.

Street Use Permits are issued for temporary use of the right-of-way during construction such as material storage, scaffolding, crane placement or crossing the curb and sidewalk with heavy equipment. Other types include private uses of the rights-of-way such as block parties or signs. These permits are considered temporary in nature and are revocable within 30 days.

Shoring and Excavation Permits are issued for excavations in or near the public right-of-way that could by the nature of the excavation affect the integrity of a right-of-way or utilities in a right-of-way.

Utility Permits are issued for the installation of underground and overhead utility mains and services in the public rights-of-way. They include power, communication, gas, steam, water, sewer, drainage, and privately owned facilities such as oil pipelines.

Annual/Renewable (Non–Construction) Permits are issued for long term use of the right-of-way such as signs, retaining walls, structural overhangs and sidewalk cafes. These permits require an annual fee and in some cases liability insurance or a public place indemnification agreement. Although these permits are issued for uses that may seem permanent they are considered temporary in nature and are revocable within 30 days.

The types of permits that are of most interest to those engaged in street improvements are explained in this chapter. For more information on the various kinds of SDOT permits, contact the [SDOT Street Use Permit Counter](#) or refer to the [SDOT CAM 2100: List of Street Use Permits](#). SDOT Street Use also allows customers to apply for certain types of permits online. Visit the [Online Permitting web site](#) for more information on submitting an online application for a street right-of-way permit. Refer to the [SDOT CAM 2105: What You Will Need to Apply for a Permit Online](#) for specific instructions.

If an applicant is applying for an over-the-counter street improvement permit, the permit can be approved subject to a field review. The field review is necessary in order for SDOT to determine whether the conditions on the site are suitable for the type of improvement desired. Some examples include paving an alley or adding an asphalt driveway. SDOT must review and approve the permit prior to commencing work.

In some cases, an applicant will want to make street improvements that are allowable, but not required by DPD permit conditions but would need to conform to SDOT Street Improvement requirements. For example, an applicant may be upgrading the interior of a building without doing any activities that require a Master Use Permit (MUP) or Construction Permit. As part of their project, they may wish to make improvements to the street right-of-way (e.g., paving, widening the sidewalk, adding street lighting). In this case, the applicant would apply to SDOT for a Street Improvement Permit. (Refer to [Section 2.4.1 Street Improvement Permits](#)).

The SDOT Permit Evaluation Form lists the types of permits that may be required for work in the street right-of-way, depending on the scope of a project. Download a form and work with an SDOT permit reviewer to complete it.

2.1.4 Applying for Other SDOT Permits

SDOT issues a number of permits for activities in the street right-of-way that are not related to construction or street improvements. These include, street vending, special events, temporary street closures, traffic and parking permits (e.g., residential parking zones), and others. Get more information on [other SDOT permits](#). SDOT Street Use also allows customers to apply for certain types of permits online. Visit the [Online Permitting web site](#) for more information on submitting an online application for a street use permit. Refer to the [SDOT CAM 2105: What You Will Need to Apply for a Permit Online](#) for instructions on how to apply for a permit online.

2.2 Street Right-of-Way Improvement Permit Classifications

The Land Use Code requires that many applicants to make improvements in the right-of-way as a part of a development project. There are three types of permits that could possibly be issued by the SDOT Street Use section in conjunction with private development. Further explanation is available on [Client Assistance Memo 2209](#).

Group 1 – Over-the-Counter (OTC) permits that can be obtained any time prior to construction or installation of the improvement. Some examples of projects include plantings, or clearing vegetation on the right-of-way and/or construction of a driveway apron on a street with an existing curb.

Group 2 – OTC permits which should be obtained concurrently with a building permit. Some project examples include constructing or rebuilding walls, rockeries, fences or sidewalks; removing any trees from the right-of-way or any road or alley paving or grading.

Group 3 – Street Use Major permits (Type 45) that requires a submittal of 90% complete engineered plans 3 days PRIOR to a DPD intake appointment. Examples of these projects include residential, commercial or multi-use construction.

As a matter of policy, SDOT considers the public benefit of structures placed in the right-of-way when determining if a discretionary improvement such as a fence or rockery will be permitted. Several Group 2 permits include structures and/or encroachments into the right-of-way including awnings, overhangs, stairways, loading platforms, and fences, rockeries and walls, both structural and nonstructural. Applicants considering constructing stairways, loading platforms, fences, rockeries or structural or nonstructural walls in the right-of-way should contact SDOT as early as possible to determine if this improvement will be permitted. SDOT will assess whether the improvement is a benefit to the adjacent property or to the public. When an improvement benefits only the adjacent property it is unlikely that SDOT will issue a permit even if there was an improvement such as a fence, wall or other structure previously occupying a portion of the right-of-way.

Applicants will need to carefully review the right-of-way improvements required for their project. If the project falls into the type of improvements in Group 2 and are not reviewed and/or permitted by SDOT at the time the applicant is obtaining their building permit, the applicant may be required to make significant changes to their private property development plans to construct their project to the appropriate grade, consistent with SDOT standards and [SMC Title 15](#).

With all of the permitting requirements, it is the sole responsibility of the applicant to obtain the necessary building permits for their building project. It will also be important to obtain and coordinate the required (if any) SDOT permits – prior to construction. It is also the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all required permits are obtained prior to project construction. Problems that occur during construction that are due to the lack of coordination with SDOT are the responsibility of the Applicant.

The permitting fees and the cost of services provided by the City of Seattle vary based on the type, duration and construction associated with the Street Improvement Permit process. Permit and inspection fees are based on the number of hours required to complete the work.

2.3 Street Improvement Permit Process Information Packet

To make the permit process as straightforward as possible, the City of Seattle has developed a Street Improvement Permit Process Information packet. This packet has three sections, each of which can function independently or as a whole. However, each section focuses on a different part of the development and permit process. Below are brief explanations of each section of the packet as well as the web link.

- The [Applicant/Developer Information Section](#) is designed to help you understand and to meet the requirements that each applicant/developer must meet in of the City of Seattle's street right-of-way improvement permit process.
- The [Engineer/Designer Information Section](#) explains the steps required of engineers/designers (including architects) in the City of Seattle's street right-of-way improvement permit process.
- The [Contractor Information Section](#) explains the steps required of contractors in the City of Seattle's street right-of-way improvement permit process.

With all of the permitting requirements, it is the sole responsibility of the applicant to obtain the necessary building permits for their building/development project. It will also be important to obtain and coordinate the required (if any) SDOT permits – prior to construction. It is also the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all required permits are obtained prior to project construction. Problems that occur during construction that are due to the lack of coordination with SDOT are the responsibility of the Applicant.

2.4 Applying for a Street Major Improvement Permit

A Street Major Improvement Permit is required for significant, permanent improvements in the street right-of-way such as paving a street, widening a street, or extending a public storm drain. For complex projects, there will be additional components of the project, such as street tree installation or curb cuts for driveways that will also be included in the Street Improvement Major Permit for the project; however, private service drains and side sewers do require separate [Side Sewer Permits](#), even when the connection of these systems to the public storm drain, sanitary, or combined sewer is shown on the Street Improvement Plan. Side Sewer Permits are issued by the Department of Planning and Development (DPD).

The following is a summary of Street Improvement Major Permit issuance procedures. For more complete information on procedures and plan requirements, refer to [SDOT CAM 2200: Street Improvement Permitting Process](#), and [SDOT CAM 2201: Plan Requirements for Construction in the Public Rights-of-Way](#).

2.4.1 Preliminary Application Report

All projects categorized as new construction by DPD are required to submit a Preliminary Application Package at the DPD Applicant Services Center. The project will be reviewed by DPD Land Use, DPD Drainage, SDOT, SPU and SCL. Following the review the applicant will receive a Preliminary Application Report (PAR). The PAR will contain an SDOT report prepared by a Plan Review Analyst and will include information on right-of-way improvements that are required for your project, the type of SDOT permit required and advice on getting Early Design Guidance from SDOT. The recommendations are based on the information provided by the applicant in the Preliminary Application Package. As with all permitting requirements, it is the sole responsibility of the applicant to obtain the necessary permits for their project prior to project construction. Problems or delays that occur during construction due to the lack of a permit or due to the lack of coordination with SDOT are the responsibility of the applicant.

2.4.2 Design Guidance

Street Use offers design guidance prior to submitting street improvement plans to help the applicant understand their street improvement requirements and design choices. Street Use will involve other city staff to help you determine how to best meet your requirements given existing constraints such as road and sidewalk widths.

2.4.3 Locating Underground Utilities

The locations of underground utilities can be obtained by calling the One Number Locator Service (ONLS) hotline (1-800 424-5555) of the Utility Underground Location Center and requesting the location of underground utilities except side sewers. Staff from the center will mark the locations of all known public and private utilities in the right-of-way. The applicant can learn the location of a side sewer through SDOT's Street Use Section. Knowing these locations in advance may save time and money during design and construction. Information on existing utilities and new utilities required for the project must be included on the street improvement plans submitted to Street Use.

2.4.4 Plan Submittal and Deposit Requirements

When a project requires a Street Improvement Major Permit, the applicant submits a completed Street Improvement [Permit Application](#), a deposit for the cost of the plan review and street improvement construction plans to [Seattle Department of Transportation](#) – Street Use Division. The plans must meet the City of Seattle standards for formatting and drafting as well as content, and must meet the City of Seattle's design standards and specifications for public works projects. The deposit for a single family residence or a duplex is \$1,250. The deposit for all other new construction projects is \$2,500. The actual cost of the permit will depend on the amount of review required to approve the plans for construction.

2.4.5 Plan Review

The Plan Review Analyst assigned to the project reviews the plans, circulates them for review to other departments of the City of Seattle and other pertinent agencies, and informs the applicant of any corrections or revisions required.

2.4.6 Submittal of Revised Plans

The applicant re-submits corrected plans and/ other requested information. The Plan Review Analyst checks the revised plans to verify if all corrections have been made and whether the plan is ready for final approval.

2.4.7 Final Approved Plans

Once the Plan Analyst notifies the applicant that the plans are ready to be approved, the applicant submits the final plan set for signatures. The final plans must meet City of Seattle standards. These plans are signed by the SDOT Street Use Plan Review Supervisor and filed in the SPU Records Vault as a permanent record of improvements in the street right-of-way.

2.4.8 Bond and Inspection Deposit Requirements

As part of the approval notification, the Plan Review Analyst will send an estimate for the inspection deposit and surety bond required for the project. This deposit will cover construction inspection fees and any review costs not covered by initial deposit. The Street Improvement Permit is issued once the applicant posts the surety bond and pays the required permit fee and inspection deposit.

2.4.9 Pre-Construction Meeting

The pre-construction meeting must be held before commencing construction in the street right-of-way. The applicant notifies SDOT at least two weeks before construction will begin so that a pre-construction meeting may be scheduled with the Street Use Inspectors and other staff. Both the applicant and the contractor must be present at the meeting.

2.5 Other Street Improvement Permits

Improvements that are limited in scope may be reviewed and permitted with an SDOT permit for that specific improvement. These limited permits are described in this section.

2.5.1 Shoring and Excavation Permits



The City of Seattle Department of Transportation requires a Street Use Shoring & Excavation Permit if a project meets the following criteria:

- excavation or construction adjacent to the street right-of-way deeper than three feet; and
- any excavation where the plane extending from the bottom of an excavation at 100% (45 degree) slope crosses the property/street right-of-way line.

This permit is required whether or not the street right-of-way is improved or even open to traffic. The purpose is to protect the stability of the street right-of-way and facilities within and/or near the street right-of-way.

In cases where there is an associated Department of Planning and Development (DPD) Construction Permit, SDOT does not issue a separate Shoring & Excavation Permit. However, when excavation on private property meets the criteria stated above, the plans for excavation or shoring must be reviewed and approved by the SDOT's Street Use Section before DPD will issue a Construction Permit.

2.5.2 Driveway and Curb Cut Permits



Driveway and curb cut installations must meet City requirements and specifications including:

- Width of the driveway or curb cut at the property line;
- [Grades and/or elevations](#) at the property line;
- [Driveway slope, crest, and curve](#);
- "Sight triangles";
- Maneuvering room on site for vehicles; and
- Objects on or adjacent to the driveway.

No existing curb: When there is no existing curb, the City of Seattle requires a Street Use Driveway Permit for the installation of a driveway that will join with a public street. SDOT issues and inspects the work for this permit.

Existing curb: The City of Seattle requires a Curb Cut Permit to remove a portion of an existing curb for the purpose of providing access to private property. This permit is issued by DPD and the work is inspected by SDOT.

2.5.3 Grade and Rock Permits

The grade and rock permits are required for alleys and for some residential access roadways. This pavement option would be used when grading or leveling a street or

alley or for installing crushed rock. If the surface area triggers the drainage code threshold, there are additional requirements to be met with this construction. More information on Stormwater, Grading and Drainage requirements is available at the [Seattle Public Utilities](#) webpage.

2.5.4 Paving Permits

Any concrete paving of a roadway requires a Street Improvement permit. If there are no other improvements to the roadway, an asphalt paving permit will be required. If the surface area of the project triggers the drainage code, there will be other requirements to be met with this construction. More information on Stormwater, Grading and Drainage requirements is available at the [Seattle Public Utilities](#) webpage.

2.5.5 Sidewalk and Sidewalk Repair permits

Property owners are responsible for maintaining the sidewalks adjacent to their property, [per SMC 15.72](#). They must ensure that snow, ice and debris do not pose a hazard to pedestrians. They must also repair cracks and other damage. The property owner of record is notified by the Street Use inspector of the repairs or action needed. If there is an unsafe condition and you want to repair the sidewalk, apply for a sidewalk permit.

A sidewalk is considered to be damaged and in need of repair in the following instances:

- The sidewalk is cracked.
- There is a fault or other discontinuity greater than 1/2 inch in the sidewalk.
- Any piece of the sidewalk can be moved with ordinary foot pressure.
- If in the view of SDOT the grade or slope of the sidewalk creates a concern for safe pedestrian passage.

If tree roots need to be cut to complete this repair, you will need to contact the Urban Forestry at 206 684-TREE.

To repair the sidewalk adjacent to your property, you will need to obtain a Street Use – sidewalk repair permit. For more information, refer to the [CAM 2208](#).

2.5.6 Private Encroachments in the Right of Way

Private encroachments in the right-of way require permits and inspections. There are two types of permits required for this type of structure. The first permit is for the construction and the second permit is an Annual/Renewable Street Use permit which is required for the long-term use of the rights-of-way such as signs, fences, retaining walls, and structural overhangs. These permits require an annual fee and in some cases

liability insurance or public place indemnity agreements. Although these permits are issued for uses that may seem permanent they are considered temporary in nature and are revocable within 30 days.

2.5.7 Overhangs and Awnings

Structural building overhangs or awnings that extend into the right-of-way require a permit for construction and also an annual permit for the use of the right-of-way. An awning will require a permit for the construction of the awning and if there is any advertising on the awning, an annual permit will also be required. More information is available at this web link for [Street Use Permits](#).

2.6 Street Trees and Landscaping Permits



SDOT standards include the preservation or planting of trees as an integral part of proposals for improvements in the street right-of-way. Selected, installed and protected to provide optimum functional and environmental benefits, trees are required street right-of-way infrastructure to be maintained and preserved for public benefit.

Though the City of Seattle issues various types of permits associated with trees and related landscape improvements on land under public jurisdiction, SDOT Urban Forestry Division is the lead for review and approval of plans for tree preservation, tree planting and related improvements in street right-of-way areas. Street Use Permits are required for installation, pruning, or removal of street trees and for installation of landscape improvements that require inspection to ensure compliance with public safety standards.

2.6.1 Street Tree Permits

To encourage the proper planting of trees in the street right-of-way, SDOT's Urban Forestry Division provides review and approval of the tree type and planting location at no cost to the applicant. Applicants are responsible for maintenance of trees planted, including regular watering to ensure establishment, mulching, and pruning to ensure appropriate clearances over streets and sidewalks. Go to the Urban Forestry webpage for more information and to get a copy of the [Street Tree Permit application](#).

2.6.2 Street Tree Removal or Pruning Permits

Street Tree Removal or Pruning Permits are required under Seattle City Ordinance #90047. Permit applications are subject to review and approval by the SDOT's Urban Forestry Division. Go to the Urban Forestry webpage for more information and to get a copy of the Street Tree – Pruning and Removal [permit application](#).

Permit applications may be required to include public notification. In cases where the

applicant is not the owner of the property abutting the proposed work, applications must include signatures of adjacent property owners. The extent of notification is determined on a case by case basis to ensure public safety and awareness and/or approval of the project. Names and addresses of contacts may be submitted for approval or provided as a component of the permit review process by the SDOT Urban Forestry Division. Permitted work must be completed within 60 working days from the time of permit issuance, unless otherwise defined by the permit.

2.6.3 Beautification Permits

[Beautification permits](#) are required for the installation of landscape improvements in the street right-of-way. SDOT's Urban Forestry Division provides support services to promote appropriate planting in the street right-of-way. Applicants are encouraged to contact [SDOT Urban Forestry Division](#) to receive information on permit requirements and/or general guidelines for landscape architectural design and construction in the street right-of-way.

2.6.4 Seattle Parks and Recreation Department Reviews and Approvals



Some streets have been designated as park drives or boulevards and are under the jurisdiction of Seattle Parks and Recreation Department (SPR) as part of the City's extensive parks system. These streets may or may not have the term "boulevard" in their name. A complete listing of streets under the jurisdiction of SPR is available as Appendix I to Title 15 of Seattle Municipal Code (SMC),

Through an agreement between SPR and SDOT, SDOT is responsible for issuing permits for street uses affecting the paved street surface of park boulevards. Any disturbance to unpaved areas of park boulevards is subject to SPR review and approval. For more information go to SPR web page concerning SPR [Revocable Use Permits](#).

The following information describes the typical permits and approvals relevant to permitting work on SPR land.

2.6.4a Non-Park Uses of Seattle Parks and Recreation Department Lands

Seattle Parks and Recreation Department (SPR), as steward of public park lands, is responsible for preserving and protecting Seattle's park system. In order to preserve the public character of park lands and assure their availability for public use and enjoyment, it is the policy of SPR to eliminate and prevent unauthorized non-park uses on SPR lands. Further, it is the policy of SPR to limit authorized non-park uses to the fullest extent practicable. Any project proposed for SPR lands must obtain permission of SPR; usually in the form of a Revocable Use Permit (refer to [Section 2.6.4b](#)). Get more information in the [complete policy](#).

2.6.4b Revocable Use Permits

Any work on park boulevards, or that may affect other park property, must be reviewed by SPR. A Revocable Use Permit, issued by the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, may be necessary. Refer to the SPR website and follow the links to [Permits for Non-Park Use of Park Property](#) or contact the Property Management Unit.

2.6.4c Design Intent for Seattle Parks and Recreation Department Boulevards and Trails

Refer to the [Seattle Parks and Recreation Department \(SPR\) website](#) for basic information that project applicants must consider when developing landscape plans affecting boulevards or other streets and roadways under SPR jurisdiction.

2.6.4d Seattle Parks and Recreation Department Tree Policy and Permits

The Seattle Parks and Recreation Department (SPR) Tree Policy was developed to maintain, preserve and enhance the urban forest within parks; to increase the overall tree canopy, tree health and tree longevity within parks including boulevards; and to ensure that parks trees are managed in a manner that is consistent with other departmental and municipal policies. Private work on trees on SPR property must be approved through issuance of a Tree Permit. Get a copy of the [permit and the complete policy](#).

2.6.4e Seattle Parks and Recreation Department Standards

The Seattle Parks and Recreation Department (SPR) Standards are intended to facilitate design and construction of SPR facilities through standard requirements on SPR property. The Standards are based upon past experiences and practices that have proved successful during design, construction, operation, and maintenance of SPR facilities. In certain situations, Consultant deviations may be acceptable provided they are approved by the Park Engineer and/or Construction Manager prior to implementation. The deviation process described in [Section 2.9 Deviation Request Process for Street Right-of-Way Improvements](#) does not apply to, or replace, the SPR derivation request process for projects on or adjacent to SPR lands. Refer to the [SPR standards homepage](#), including SPR, CAD and Survey standards.

2.6.5 Department of Planning and Development Tree Protection Regulations

The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) enforces regulations regarding tree and vegetation protection and removal on private property and in the street right-of-way. To determine the regulations that apply to a specific site, reference DPD [Client Assistance Memo \(CAM\) #242: Tree Protection Regulations in Seattle](#) if the site is not in an Environmentally Critical Area or DPD [CAM #331: Environmentally Critical Areas: Tree and Vegetation Overview](#).

2.7 Utility Permits

Street Use issues permits to construct maintain and operate railroad or streetcar tracks, pipes, ducts, utility tunnels, vaults, maintenance holes, poles, fixtures, wires or any other appurtenants on, under or over the streets, alleys or public places of the City of Seattle. These installations include in part: gas mains and services; electrical manholes and conduits; telecommunication manholes and conduits; steam mains and services; water mains and services; utility poles; underground fuel storage tanks; and aerial CATV and telecommunications cables.

The applicant must submit an application and plan detailing the proposed utility to the Franchise and Utility Permit Section. The application and plan will be reviewed and any corrections noted before a permit will be issued.

2.7.1 Drainage Requirements

Any land disturbing activity or new and replaced impervious surface of 750 square feet or more requires Drainage Control Review. For more information about drainage approvals and submittal requirements refer to DPD [Client Assistance Memo \(CAM\) 501 Making Sense of Seattle's Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code](#), or contact DPD's Site Development staff or Drainage & Sewer Review staff. For grading related to Construction Permits, refer to [DPD CAM 502, Grading Regulations in Seattle](#).

The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code (SGCD) also guides temporary erosion and sediment control requirements for private development projects. In addition, [Seattle's Standard Plans and Standard Specifications](#) guide temporary erosion and sediment control in the street right-of-way. The Regional Road Maintenance Endangered Species Act Program provides recommended best management practices for routine maintenance activities in the street right-of-way.

All new construction projects receive a comprehensive set of City drainage requirements for private development and right-of-way improvements from DPD Drainage and SPU in the Preliminary Application Review. This allows applicants to assess project drainage infrastructure requirements.

From there, it is possible to estimate the amount of new or replaced impervious surfaces, and the project is routed to Seattle Public Utilities for a determination of drainage code requirements. Requirements may be based on a variety of factors, such as City policies, codes, and the condition and capacity of existing city infrastructure, as it relates to or is impacted by the proposed project.

Required right-of-way drainage infrastructure improvements are considered major right-of-way improvements. The applicant will be required to get a Street Improvement Major Permit. The drainage elements of the plan will be reviewed and approved by SPU.

2.7.2 Side Sewer Permitting

Side sewers, which include service drains and any other piping that is connected to public storm drains or sewers, are installed, owned, and maintained by the owner of the property being served. This ownership extends from the building structure to the tee or wye connection at the main, and therefore the property owner is responsible for excavation, installation, and restoration within the street right-of-way.

Side sewer construction shall be in accordance with the City of Seattle Standard Plans and Specifications, latest edition. There may be additional requirements for service taps, backfilling, shoring, and restoration within the street right-of-way or public easement.

Side Sewer permitting is administered by the Department of Planning and Development, which provides guidance and ensures that requirements are met by performing application review and site inspection. Construction work in the street right-of-way is inspected by SDOT. For more information on side sewer permitting please read [DPD CAM 503](#). If your work on a side sewer involves any impeding any traffic on an arterial, a traffic control plan is required. See the SDOT CAMs on [Traffic Control Plan Checklist](#) and [Traffic Control Plan submittals](#).

2.7.4 Stormwater Management and Temporary Construction Dewatering

In constructing street right-of-way improvements that involve ground disturbance or excavation, there are requirements for managing stormwater flows during construction. At minimum, a Temporary Erosion and Sediment Control Plan will need to be prepared and submitted as part of the requirements of the Street Use Permit. Other permits will be required. A Waste Discharge Permit from King County or state permits may also be required. Refer to [Section 2.9.3 State and Federal Permits and Approvals](#).

Dewatering is defined as the removal and appropriate discharge and release of surface water and subsurface water. Temporary dewatering is when this activity occurs during construction. If this activity is significant in terms of impact, the applicant will be required to prepare a Temporary Dewatering Plan, subject to approval by Seattle Public Utilities. The applicant will need to obtain a Temporary Side Sewer Permit in order to dispose of dewatering discharges, as administered through DPD as well as King County. Significant activities triggering these requirements include; excavations greater than 12 feet deep, encountering groundwater during construction, encountering contaminated water, and other triggers. Refer to the [Side Sewer Permit for Temporary Dewatering Director's Rule \(DR 04-3\)](#) for detailed information on requirements.

2.7.5 Water Services, Hydrants, and Other Water System Appurtenances

The installation of water services, hydrants, and other water system appurtenances in the street right-of-way that are to serve a property or development requires a Street Use Permit issued by SDOT and either a standard charge or a time and materials charge payable to SPU. The installation of these facilities is done by SPU and the Street Use Permit is obtained by SPU.

To obtain a water service, there are several key steps:

- Determine your use, and the flow range and diameter of the water service you need. Contact SPU's Customer Service consultants for assistance – 206 684-5800.
- Obtain a [Water Availability Certificate \(WAC\)](#) to determine whether water service is available to your property. A legal description and the name and address of the owner/contact person is required per the WAC. If water is available, you can apply for a water service with SPU's Customer Service Branch. For details, please review the [SPU CAM 1202](#). At the time of this application, [payment for the water service](#) must be made. In some cases, a plan by a registered professional engineer that is acceptable to SPU may be required. Otherwise SPU will use its standard details.
- Once application and payment has been made, the Street Use Permit application and installation is completed by SPU.

If hydrants and other water system appurtenances in the street right-of-way are needed for your project and they are an individual installation (e.g., water fountain, hydrant) that is not part of a larger water system improvement, then a request and payment will need to be made to SPU.

Contact SPU for more information and a standard charge or time and materials charge payable to SPU will be required prior to the commencement of any work. In some cases, a design by a registered professional engineer will be needed. Once the fees and design are complete, the Street Use Permit and installation are performed by SPU as is the case with water service installations. Refer to the SPU website for details on how to [initiate water services](#).

2.7.6 City Light Permit Processes for New Street Lights

For streetlight installations on street existing wood poles, no permit is required. If Seattle City Light has to install a new wood pole in the street right-of-way for a streetlight, then a permit is required for the pole, but not for the streetlight itself. For more details, go to the SCL webpage for [new service](#) connection.

If a metal streetlight standard is installed in an area where utilities are underground, a permit will be required for doing trenching in the street right-of-way. That permit will cover the installation for the conduits, the streetlight base, and the light standard.

2.7.7 City Light Permit Processes for Pole and Wireless Attachments

Fiber optic or cable attachments: A Street Use Permit is not required for Seattle City Light to process Pole Attachment Applications. City Light also does not need a Street Use Permit to prepare an existing pole for the new attachment. However, if a pole must be replaced to accommodate a new cable or wireless antenna attachment, then City Light would obtain a permit for setting the pole. This is not to be confused with the applicant's own work in the street right-of-way. In all cases, the applicant, who requests to attach equipment on City Light poles, must obtain a Street Use Permit from SDOT prior to constructing their system.

In addition to obtaining the aforementioned Street Use Permit from SDOT, the applicant must also obtain permission and approval from City Light prior to attaching any of their equipment on City Light poles. A pole attachment application must be submitted to City Light well in advance. A Master Pole Attachment Agreement is also required if the applicant is going to attach their equipment to seven or more City Light poles. Contact City Light Distribution Design Office for information regarding the Pole Attachment Application form and the Master Pole Attachment Agreement.

Wireless antenna attachments: For wireless antenna attachments on City Light poles, there is a review process, which, among other things, includes a request for preliminary determination from City Light as to the feasibility of a site for such equipment, a submittal of written application in writing along with a deposit and/or bond to cover the work, etc. Contact [City Light Property Services](#) for more information regarding City Light requirements and processes for wireless antenna attachments.

2.7.8 Privately Owned Utilities

If the project impacts an underground utility, it is possible that the utility is owned and maintained by a private entity, which has been granted authority by the City of Seattle to place facilities in the street right-of-way. The Utility Permit Specialist in SDOT Street Use Division will inform the applicant of any special requirements that may apply.

2.8 Other Street Right-of-Way Improvement Activities

City Departments also regulate or provide guidance on a number of other activities that impact the public rights-of-way. This section defines the existing process for other improvement-related activities.

2.8.1 Street and Alley Vacation Process

If your proposed project includes incorporating street right-of-way into the development or includes the realignment of street right-of-way, it will be necessary to petition for a street vacation. A street vacation is the process by which an abutting property owner can petition the City to acquire the adjacent street right-of-way.

Street and Alley Vacations are reviewed by SDOT, the Seattle Design Commission and City Council who makes the final decision on whether or not to grant the vacation. The City has established policies and procedures to guide the decision. Because the City takes such a careful look, it is important to contact the street vacation staff early in your development planning. Street vacation staff can explain the process, costs and time frame associated with the review of a vacation. Staff will also make every effort to assess whether a vacation appears to be feasible in your particular circumstance. Tunnels and aerial use of the street right-of-way also require vacations.

Get more information about [street vacations](#).

2.8.2 Shoreline Street Ends and Unimproved Rights-of-Way

Shoreline Street Ends are those platted streets that run into water and provide access and/or views of Lake Washington, Lake Union or Puget Sound. The City has 149 shoreline street ends. Many are already open to the public. [SDOT Director's Rule 00-1](#), the City's guidelines on the Shoreline Street Ends Program, includes improving a shoreline street end for public access.

[City Resolution 29370](#), adopted in September 1996, identified shoreline street ends as a scarce and valuable public resource which should be open for the enjoyment and benefit of the public. This policy was adopted after much public discussion and careful consideration. [Ordinance 119673](#) was adopted in October 1999 to establish a new type of permit and a new fee schedule for permitting private uses of the shoreline street ends. Although the ultimate goal is to remove private uses of these street ends, the permit process acknowledges some private uses will continue.

Refer to [Section 2.12.3 State and Federal Permits and Approvals](#) for information on additional permits that may be required for work on street ends including Army Corps of Engineer Permits Section 10: Hydraulic Permit Approval (HPA) and Section 401: Discharge of Dredge and Fill. Refer to [Section 2.7.4 Shoreline Substantial Development Permits](#), as the project may also require a Shoreline Permit.

2.8.3 Traffic Control Signs in the Street Right-of-Way

Development projects are required to identify existing traffic control signs in public rights-of-way and replace them following construction. Modifications to existing signage can be requested through the [Street Improvement Permit Process](#).

2.9 Deviation Request Process for Street Right-of-Way Improvements

2.9.1 What is a Deviation Request

The design criteria presented in this Manual have been developed to assure that Seattle's street rights-of-way are designed in such a manner as to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public and to minimize post-construction maintenance and repair costs.

An applicant can request a deviation from the design criteria in this Manual for a street right-of-way improvement project by following the process defined in this section. In the case of a deviation request, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) will require the applicant to follow the procedure defined in [Section 2.9.2 Deviation Request Submittal Process](#). The final decision on whether a deviation request is granted lies with SDOT.

Any project that modifies or potentially impacts the operation or maintenance of traffic signals or street lights will be deemed a deviation. The SDOT signal or lighting staff lead will immediately begin working with developer or agents to determine if the deviation request is feasible.

The Deviation Request Process defined in this section applies to deviations from the design criteria presented in this Manual, and does not apply to or replace, any other deviation, variance or exception process required for the City of Seattle permits or approvals or those of other agencies. Requests to modify or waive a Land Use Code requirement for street improvements must be submitted to DPD (see [DPD CAM 205](#) for instructions to apply for Street and Alley Improvement Exceptions).

2.9.2 Deviation Request Submittal Process

1. **Initial contact:** An applicant will contact SDOT Street Use staff to request a deviation for a street right-of-way improvement.
2. **Optional design guidance meeting:** The applicant has the option to participate in a Design Guidance meeting with SDOT staff to share contact information and discuss information relative to proposed street right-of-way improvements, including potential deviations and the necessary information that SDOT will require to evaluate the deviation request prior to permit submittal. The deviation review is completed by SDOT staff and an hourly fee is charged to the applicant. Refer to the Street Use fee schedule. The total cost of the deviation review will depend upon the complexity of the request.
3. **Deviation request submittal:** If the applicant chooses to apply for a deviation,

he or she must submit the following:

- A completed [Deviation Request Form](#).
- Site Plan including:
 - Site Address, property lines, street right-of-way and existing easement dimensions.
 - Topographic survey of existing site including underground and overhead utilities.
 - Proposed improvements at a conceptual design level illustrating proposed building footprint, modifications to roadways, modifications to traffic signals, driveways, utility connections, stormwater facilities, pedestrian facilities, retaining structures, and landscape features.
- Description of how proposed work is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Strategic Plan, as well as any subarea transportation plans or neighborhood plans relevant to the area.
- Engineering justification for the deviation proposal. The justification should describe the impacts of meeting the standard and why the deviation is the preferred alternative.
- Proposed project schedule.
- Information on existing and predicted vehicular and pedestrian traffic volumes, when changes are expected as a result of the project.
- If any addition or modification of traffic signals is part of the deviation request, the applicant can access information from the signal files in Traffic Operations and other as-built records.
- Any additional information defined in the optional Design Guidance meeting that SDOT determine necessary to evaluate the deviation request.

The permit reviewer will do a quick review of the deviation request to determine if it meets the minimum submittal requirements.

4. **Deviation request coordination and review:** When a deviation request is submitted, SDOT's Street Use staff will consult with appropriate staff within SDOT and other departments that will be impacted by the deviation. If no further information is needed to process the deviation request, SDOT will typically process the request and notify the applicant if the request has been accepted or rejected within one week of the submittal. If City staff require additional information to process the request, the SDOT reviewer will alert the applicant to the expected timeframe for review of the deviation submittal (typically not more than 30 days).
5. **Permit submittal:** Depending on the nature of the improvement, SDOT may require the deviation request to be signed and sealed by a professional engineer and approved by SDOT before the issuance of a Street Right-of-Way Improvement Permit. Following acceptance or rejection of the deviation request, the applicant will submit finalized plans for the street right-of-way improvement to SDOT's Street Use Division.

Note: Approved deviation requests will apply for a period of two years from the date of approval. After the two year period, the applicant will be required to modify the proposal to be consistent with the standards that are current at the time they submit a permit

application.

2.10.1 Street Improvement Requirements

The Land Use code identifies levels of required street improvements associated with development. Refer to the [DPD website](#) for more information, including specific sections of the Land Use Code. Exceptions to the required street improvements may be granted. Contact DPD to discuss exceptions that are allowable through the Land Use Code. To apply for a Land Use Code Street or Alley Improvement Exception, see [DPD CAM 205](#).

2.10.2 SEPA Environmental Review

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), RCW Chapter 43.21 C, requires governmental agencies to consider the environmental impacts of a proposal before making decisions.

The environmental impacts of certain public and private development proposals must be assessed by the City of Seattle per SEPA and the Seattle SEPA Ordinance - [Chapter 25.05](#), Seattle Municipal Code (SMC). The level of documentation required to comply with SEPA is dictated by the type of impacts a project may have. There are three levels of documentation:

- **Categorical exemption:** State and local SEPA regulations list certain types of projects presumed to have minimal or no impacts. A SEPA review is not required for these exempt projects. However, certain state and federal permits may require a letter or memo indicating a project is exempt. SEPA exemptions are listed in [SMC 25.05.800](#) and for DPD permits are further clarified in [DPD Director's Rule 15-2007](#).
- **Determination of non-significance (DNS):** During the review of a project under SEPA, impacts from a proposal may be limited to those which are fairly minor in scope or otherwise are not considered to be significantly adverse. This determination may be made after reviewing a SEPA checklist and other supporting documentation. The Seattle SEPA Ordinance includes policies that may allow for mitigation from identified adverse impacts. SEPA checklist requirements can be found in [SMC 25.05.315](#).
- **Determination of significance (DS):** When review of a proposal determines that expected adverse impacts may be significant, a Determination of Significance may be made, requiring the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS). A description of SEPA EIS requirements can be found in [SMC 25.05.400](#).

2.10.2.a Environmental Review as Part of the Permit Process.

In order for these assessments to be made, permit applicants whose projects meet certain criteria are required to prepare an [Environmental Checklist](#). Refer to [DPD Director's Rule 15-2007: State Environmental Policy Act \(SEPA\) Exemptions from Environmental Review Requirements When Establishing, Changing, or Expanding a Use](#). For a complete listing of exempt and non-exempt projects, refer to [SMC Chapter 25.05.305](#)

Environmental review is a part of the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) Master

Use Permit (MUP) process. Components of a MUP may also include use approvals, variances, administrative conditional uses, design review, special exceptions, shoreline district approvals, short plats, and certain street uses. DPD is also responsible for environmental review of City Council conditional uses, full subdivisions, major institution master plans, rezones, and Land Use Code text amendments. For some development projects whose adverse impacts may significantly affect the environment, a checklist will not provide adequate environmental review. Projects that may significantly impact the environment will require an environmental impact statement (EIS).

2.10.2.b Filling Out the Environmental Checklist.

If a project is subject to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and not categorically exempt, an [Environmental Checklist](#) must be filled out and submitted by the applicant at the time of DPD permit application, so that DPD can review the project for compliance. Refer to the Environmental Checklist on the DPD website or contact the DPD Public Resource Center.

If the environmental review for a project has been completed by another City department or by a different governmental agency, a copy of the threshold determination and the Environmental Checklist—or the draft and final EIS—must be made available to the public at DPD's Public Resource Center. A copy of the threshold determination and environmental impact statement (EIS), if any, must also be submitted to DPD at the time of application for a Master Use Permit or Construction Permit or City Council approval.

Applicants must fill out the Environmental Checklist accurately and completely in ink, acknowledging potential impacts, including those associated with demolition, grading, and construction (temporary as well as permanent). Measures that an applicant plans to take to mitigate adverse environmental impacts associated with a project should be discussed under the appropriate element(s) of the environment.

The completed checklist must be dated and signed and must include the complete street address of the project. Future development proposals related to the project should be discussed even if details are not fully established. This will ensure that the applicant does not need to go through an additional environmental review and appeal period later in the process. However, discussion of future development proposals in the checklist does not exempt an applicant from independent SEPA review of a future project, if that project is over SEPA thresholds. For example, if it is known that a second phase of an office building is likely to follow the initial phase for which permits are sought, that information should be disclosed in the checklist for the first project, but does not by itself exempt the second phase from environmental review at the time of future permit application.

In most circumstances, the review for the total proposal must be completed before any permits can be issued. The more complete the information provided, the faster the review of the project can be conducted. If the information submitted is incomplete or if additional information is needed to make an accurate analysis of the environmental impacts of a project, the applicant will be required to furnish further information. Contact a DPD Land Use Planner for more information on these requirements.

2.10.2.c Transportation Impact Analysis and Parking Demand Studies

A SEPA review may result in transportation mitigation measures consistent with SEPA policies such as full or partial contributions to transportation system improvements, such as new or upgraded traffic signals or roadway modifications.

As part of the environmental review process, transportation impact analyses (TIA) or parking demand studies may be required to document a project's transportation or parking impacts. A TIA typically estimates traffic volumes that a proposed project would generate, and compares the operating conditions of nearby intersections or roadway segments with and without the additional traffic. A TIA may also estimate potential traffic queues, examine any outstanding safety issues, and assess the impact of the project on transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities.

Projects may also be required to demonstrate that they satisfy transportation concurrency requirements established under the Washington State Growth Management Act. The City of Seattle uses a screenline approach to track transportation concurrency. Under this approach, a transportation analysis estimates the auto trips generated by the project that will cross one or more screenlines near the project site. Project volumes plus background traffic volumes for a screenline are compared to the established capacity for the screenline. Refer to the Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Element for additional information on level of service standards and screenlines.

Parking demand studies compare a project's expected peak parking demand with its proposed supply. Peak parking demand may be the same as, or less than, code-required parking for a particular project, or it may exceed code requirements. If a comparison of parking demand and supply indicates that parking may spill over onto adjacent streets or off-street parking lots, a parking utilization study may be required to document the ability of nearby on- and off-street parking areas to absorb the estimated spillover. Refer to DPD Client Assistance Memo (CAM) 117: Parking Waivers for Accessory Dwelling Units for guidelines on how to complete a parking demand study. Refer to SMC 25.05.675, Specific Environmental Policies, Section M: Parking, to determine if parking spillover needs to be mitigated. The specific distance to evaluate in a parking study as well as the time of day in which to perform parking counts may vary from the specific example described in DPD CAM 117.

2.10.2.d Hazardous Materials Analysis

The Environmental Elements, Environmental Health sections of the SEPA checklist require the disclosure of any environmental releases or potential releases to the environment affecting public health. This disclosure would be noted in Section B-7a of this form. These would include any toxic or hazardous materials that may be caused by, or encountered during a proposed project. This includes contamination of private property and potential migration into the street right-of-way. This section of the checklist should summarize any analyses that have been completed, evidence of past contamination, or reports' indicating the site has been contaminated. Phase I and/or Phase II Environmental Site Assessments, property record searches, communications with the Washington State Department of Ecology, and cleanup action reports. These documents should accompany the checklist. Similarly, a section on environmental health should be included in an EIS and be accompanied by similar evaluations.

For more information on SEPA contact a DPD Permit Specialist.

2.10.3 Design Review Requirements and Procedures



The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) coordinates the citywide Design Review Program. Design Review helps new developments to contribute positively to neighborhoods by exploring ways in which new multifamily and commercial buildings can best respond to their sites and distinctive surroundings. The Design Review Guidelines provide a flexible tool, offering alternatives to the prescriptive zoning requirements and specific regulations found in the City's Land Use Code. [DPD's website](#) includes a section on design review that provides a number of resources for project applicants who will be required to complete the [Design Review Process](#).

Most design guidelines are neighborhood specific. In some cases, design guidelines exist that describe unique characteristics or features that are desirable in the street right-of-way.

The guidelines form the backbone of the design review program. The Design Review Board, the developers and architects and the City's planning staff all refer to them when shaping a development or project.

- [Design Review Guidelines for Multi-Family and Commercial Buildings](#). This covers all board districts except for Downtown (see map of districts);
- [Neighborhood-Specific Design Guidelines](#): supplements the Design Review Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings in certain neighborhoods which have adopted them; and
- [Design review guidelines for Downtown Development](#). Covers Downtown development only see map of districts).

2.10.4 Shoreline Substantial Development Permits



Shoreline Permits are elements of the Master Use Permit (MUP) process administered by the Department of Planning and Development (DPD). Shoreline Permit regulations are required by the Shoreline Management Act of 1971, as amended, [Chapter 90.58](#) of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). This State law requires local governments to establish a program consistent with rules adopted by the State Department of Ecology (DOE) for the administration and enforcement of the permit system titled State of Washington Shoreline Master Program Guidelines. Accordingly, the City has adopted regulations for the shorelines of the City in the Seattle Shoreline Master Program. Those regulations are contained in [Chapter 23.60 of the Seattle Municipal Code \(SMC\)](#). DPD has a [Client Assistance Memo \(CAM\) # 209: Master Use Permit Application Requirements for Shoreline Permits](#).

Permit requirements: A Shoreline Substantial Development Permit is required for projects which propose to undertake a “substantial development” within the “Shoreline District” as defined by the Seattle Shoreline Master Program. Substantial development is generally defined as any development, the total cost or fair market value of which exceeds five thousand dollars (\$5,000), OR any development which materially interferes with the normal public use of the water or shorelines of the City, as excepted below:

Exceptions: State law specifically exempts certain types of development from the requirement to obtain a [Substantial Development Permit](#). These exemptions are listed in [DPD CAM 209](#). If a project is exempt, the applicant must obtain a written confirmation from DPD before any other required City, State or Federal permit can be issued. The City's shorelines (designated the “Shoreline District”) include Seattle's saltwater shorelines, Salmon Bay, Lake Union, the Ship Canal, Lake Washington, Green Lake, and the Duwamish River, PLUS “associated wetlands” of these waters. By definition, associated wetlands comprise an area extending 200 feet landward, as measured on a horizontal plane from the ordinary high water mark, PLUS marshes, swamps,

bogs, floodways, river deltas and flood plains associated with such areas.

2.10.5 Dedication of Street Right-of-Way or Easement

Developers and contractors are sometimes required by DPD to dedicate property for transportation purposes in order to receive a Construction Permit. When this occurs, DPD notifies the SDOT Real Property Services that a dedication of private property is required. SDOT works directly with the developers to ensure they comply with the permitting requirements. For more details, [refer to SDOT Cam 2203](#) for more information and procedures on dedications of street right-of-way or easements.

2.10.6 No-Protest Agreement for Future Improvements

When a proposed development is not required to provide full street improvements, a No-Protest Agreement is required. A No-Protest Agreement is a document signed by the property owner signifying agreement not to object to the formation of a Local Improvement District (LID) for constructing future street improvements. Get more information on No-Protest Agreements, including a [No-Protest Agreement Form](#). See [Chapter 3.1 of the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual](#).

2.11 Department of Planning and Development Construction Permits

Grading Regulations and Permitting: Grading activity, whether or not it requires a permit or approval from the City, must comply with the provisions of the [Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code \(SGDC\)](#). The following guidance applies:

- Separate Grading Permits issued by DPD are required for work on private property when the work is not associated with a Building Permit.
- When grading is associated with a Construction Permit, grading review and approval become a component of the Construction Permit and a separate Grading Permit is not required.
- Grading review takes place only when the thresholds referred to in the DPD [Client Assistance Memo 502: Grading Regulations](#) in Seattle are exceeded. DPD administers the grading and drainage provisions of the SGDC for work on private property when part of a Building or Grading Permit.

When documentation exists or it is suspected that hazardous materials will be encountered at the site, known information concerning the nature, occurrence, and the extent of the contamination shall be included in the Environmental Checklist.

Refer to the [Building and Alley Grade Sheet](#) to determine appropriate grades for a project.

For more information about grading approvals, permits, standards or submittal requirements for a specific project, contact [DPD's Site Development staff](#).

2.12 Environmental Permits and Approvals

Environmental Permits and approvals are a necessary component of many types of development projects, including those that impact street rights-of way. This section details local, state and federal Environmental Permits and approvals that may apply to a development project. Two charts follow that summarize the Environmental Permits for the City and State/Federal agencies. More detailed information on each permit type, regulation or approval process can either be found in this chapter or through a link to the responsible agency.

2.12.1 City of Seattle Environmental Permits/Approvals

2.12.1.a Environmentally Critical Areas

City of Seattle Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs) apply to sites that include landslide prone, flood-prone, riparian corridor, wetland, and steep slope environmentally critical areas. Activity in these areas requires preparation of a surveyed site plan and submittal of additional information relating to critical areas and their buffers as part of the application and review process for development proposals. This information is required in addition to technical reports described in [SMC 25.09.060](#) and plot plan requirements outlined in [Client Assistance Memo \(CAM\) 103B: Environmentally Critical Area Site Plan Requirements](#).

2.12.1.b Temporary Erosion and Sediment Control

Refer to [Section 2.7.1 Grading and Drainage in Seattle](#)

2.12.1.c Construction Stormwater Control Technical Requirements Manual (DR 16-2000)

Refer to [Section 2.7.1 Grading and Drainage in Seattle](#)

2.12.1.d Landmarks Certificate of Approval

In Seattle, a Certificate of Approval is required for any project that will alter the appearance (including demolition) of a protected feature of a designated landmark or a property located in an historic or special review district. This process requires submittal of an application to the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) Office of Urban Conservation and review by the Seattle Landmarks Board or the review board for the landmark district.

If your project may affect a landmark or is in one of the following districts, you will need to talk with staff at the [Department of Neighborhoods](#). Review of these applications varies from district to district, depending upon the special characteristics of each area. For site-specific information, refer to the following SMC sections and ordinance.

- International District—SMC 23.66.318
- Pioneer Square Preservation District—SMC 23.66.115
- Pike Place Market Historical District—SMC 25.24.060
- Columbia City Landmark District—SMC 25.20.070
- Ballard Avenue Landmark District—SMC 25.16.065
- Harvard-Belmont Landmark District—SMC 25.12.090
- Fort Lawton Landmark District—Ordinance 114011

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Policies regarding preservation of landmarks are found in SMC

25.05.675.

NOTE: If your building appears to meet the criteria for landmark designation, but is not currently designated as a landmark, the structure may be referred to the Landmarks Preservation Board for consideration (per SMC 25.05.675H2c).

2.12.2 King County Permits and Approvals

Some projects may require a King County Waste Discharge Permit. These permits are needed if the discharge could be expected to contain chemicals or contaminants that differ from ordinary sewage. The permit is also needed when discharging drainage into a sanitary-only sewer. This is only allowed if the drainage is contaminated and it is not feasible to pre-treat and discharge to the drainage system. Get more information on the King County Waste Discharge Permit. For more information, call King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks at 206-263-3001.

2.12.3 State and Federal Permits and Approvals

Permit Type	Overview and Web Link	Agency
Air Quality	<p>Notice of Construction Approval (NOC): Ecology or the local air authority has review and approval authority for the construction of new sources or modifications to existing sources of air pollution.</p> <p>Sources proposing to construct a new source or modify an existing source must submit a Notice of Construction Application to Ecology or the local air authority. The application must include a description of the new or modified source, the types of equipment used that will generate air pollution, the types and amounts of air pollutants released into the air, and proposed methods for air pollution control or prevention.</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Ecology Air Quality Program 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-6800 (360) 407-6802 fax</p>
Aquatic Resources	<p>Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA): Work that uses, diverts, obstructs, or changes the natural flow or bed of any of the salt or fresh waters of state requires a Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA). Permit processing can take up to 45 days following receipt of a complete application package. Download the application for an individual permit, called a Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA).</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife 600 Capital Way North Olympia, WA 98501-1091 (360) 902-2464 (360) 902-2946 fax</p>
	<p>Aquatic Use Authorization: Anyone wishing to use state-owned aquatic lands (including harbors, state tidelands, shorelands, and beds of navigable waters and owners of adjacent lands) must get authorization from DNR. Other activities for which authorization is required include shellfish/aquaculture leases, geoduck harvest sales, dredge disposal, easements for bridges and utility crossings (including outfalls), and sand and gravel removal. Download an application for</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Resources Division 1111 Washington Street SE PO Box 47027 Olympia, WA 98504-7027</p>

	an individual permit, called a Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA) .	(360) 902-1100 (360) 902-1786 fax
Archaeological and Cultural Resources	Archaeological Excavation Permit : Excavation altering or removing archaeological resources or Native Indian grave sites. The status of any sites or structures listed in or eligible for the State or National Register of Historic Places or Local Landmark designation may need to be determined. Plans for protection or mitigation measures may be a condition of any permit issued. Get more information from the DPD Director's Rule 2-98 .	Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation 1063 South Capitol Way, Suite 106 P.O. Box 48343 Olympia WA 98501 360-586-3065 360-586-3067 fax
Water Quality—Federal	<p>401 Water Quality Certification: Applying for a federal permit or license to conduct any activity that might result in a discharge of dredge or fill material into water or non-isolated wetlands or excavation in water or non-isolated wetlands. Issuance of a certification means that the Ecology anticipates that the applicant's project will comply with state water quality standards and other aquatic resource protection requirements under Ecology's authority. The 401 Certification can cover both the construction and operation of the proposed project. Conditions of the 401 Certification become conditions of the Federal permit or license. Download an application for an individual permit, called a Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA).</p> <p>Coastal Zone Consistency Determination: Activities and development affecting coastal resources which involve federal activities, federal licenses or permits, and federal assistance programs (funding) require a written Coastal Zone Management (CZM) decision by Ecology.</p>	<p>Department of Ecology Office of Regulatory Assistance Environmental Permitting Service 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-7037 (800) 917-0043 toll free (360) 407-6711 fax Website: http://www.ora.wa.gov/</p>
	Section 10 Permit - Work in Navigable Waters : An Army Corps of Engineers Permit is required when locating a structure, excavating, or discharging dredged or fill material in waters of the United States or transporting dredged material for the purpose of dumping it into ocean waters. Typical projects requiring these permits include the construction and maintenance of piers, wharfs, dolphins, breakwaters, bulkheads, groins, jetties, mooring buoys, and boat ramps.	US Army Corps of Engineers Seattle District Regulatory Branch PO Box 3755 Seattle, WA 98124-2255 (206) 764-3495 (206) 764-6602 fax
	Section 404 Permit - Discharge of Dredge and Fill Material : An Army Corps of Engineers Permit is required when locating a structure, excavating, or	US Army Corps of Engineers Seattle District Regulatory

	<p>discharging dredged or fill material in waters of the United States or transporting dredged material for the purpose of dumping it into ocean waters. Typical projects requiring these permits include the construction and maintenance of piers, wharfs, dolphins, breakwaters, bulkheads, groins, jetties, mooring buoys, and boat ramps.</p>	<p>Branch PO Box 3755 Seattle , WA 98124-2255 (206) 764-3495 (206) 764-6602 fax</p>
<p>Waste and Toxic Substance Permits</p>	<p>Dangerous Waste Treatment, Storage, and Disposal Facility: Facilities that store, treat, and/or dispose of dangerous waste must obtain a Dangerous Waste Permit for any dangerous waste activities that do not meet the less-stringent generator requirements.</p>	<p>Department of Ecology Headquarters 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-6000 Website: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/</p>
	<p>Hazardous Substance Release Notification Requirement (MTCA): The Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) is a citizen-mandated hazardous waste cleanup law. Under the MTCA regulations, owners and operators must report to Ecology any release or threatened release of a hazardous substance on their site. This requirement must be met if a historical release or a situation that could cause a release is discovered on a site. A verbal or written report must be made within ninety days of discovery.</p>	<p>Department of Ecology Headquarters 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-6000 Website: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/</p>
	<p>Hazardous Waste Release Notification (Spills or Releases): Prompt notification to Ecology is required when spills or releases of hazardous substances occur that have the potential to impact human health or the environment. Responsibility for reporting spills lies with the person who spills or releases the substance; however, any person aware of such spills is encouraged to contact Ecology.</p>	<p>Department of Ecology Headquarters 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-6000 Website: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/</p>
	<p>Model Toxics Control Act-Reporting Independent Remedial Actions: Any person who conducts an independent remedial action must submit a written report to Ecology within ninety days of completing the action. (Refer to the discussion of underground storage tanks (UST) for requirements specific to USTs) A limited number of these reports are reviewed by Ecology to evaluate, as a whole, the independent remedial actions conducted.</p>	<p>Department of Ecology Toxics Cleanup Program Headquarters 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-7170 (360) 407-7154 fax Website: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/cleanup.html</p>
	<p>Resource Conservation & Recovery Act (RCRA) Site ID Number: The required Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Site ID#</p>	<p>Department of Ecology Hazardous Waste & Toxics Reduction Program</p>

	<p>is an identifying number used for tracking wastes from their point of generation to final disposal. The Uniform Hazardous Waste Manifest system (EPA Form 8700-22) is the primary mechanism to ensure that wastes reach their intended destination. The transporter and the receiving facility signatures on the manifest you have prepared and sent with the shipment provide some assurance that the waste has been properly handled.</p> <p>Download an application for an individual permit, called a Notification of Dangerous Waste Activities FORM 2.</p>	<p>Headquarters 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-6700 (360) 407-6715 fax Website: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/hwtr/index.html</p>
	<p>Underground Injection Control Registration: A state registration form, available from the Department of Ecology, must be completed by people who have installed or intend to install an underground injection control (UIC) well. A drywell, infiltration trench with perforated pipe, subsurface infiltration gallery and large on site septic system are some examples of UIC wells that need to register. Permits may be required, but would be determined on a site by site basis.</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Ecology Water Quality Program 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-6400 (360) 407-6426 fax</p>
	<p>Underground Storage Tank Notification Requirements: A state notification form, available from the Department of Ecology must be completed by people who have installed or intend to install an underground storage tank (UST).</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Ecology Toxics Cleanup Program 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-7170 (360) 407-7154 fax</p>
<p>Water Quality Permits</p>	<p>NPDES Individual Permit: A permit is required for soil disturbing activities (including grading, stump removal, demolition), where one or more acres will be disturbed, and have a discharge of stormwater to a receiving water (e.g., wetlands, creeks, unnamed creeks, rivers, marine waters, ditches, estuaries), and/or storm drains that discharge to a receiving water. If stormwater is retained on site, but detention facilities need to be constructed, permit coverage is required.</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Ecology Water Quality Program 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-6400 (360) 407-6426 fax</p>
	<p>NPDES Construction Stormwater General Permit: A permit is required for soil disturbing activities (including grading, stump removal, demolition), where 1 or more acres will be disturbed, and have</p>	<p>Washington State Department of Ecology Water Quality Program 300 Desmond Drive</p>

	a discharge of stormwater to a receiving water (e.g., wetlands, creeks, unnamed creeks, rivers, marine waters, ditches, estuaries), and/or storm drains that discharge to a receiving water. Browse Ecology's Construction Booklet for more information.	PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-6400 (360) 407-6426 fax
	State Waste Discharge Permit: Planned discharge of wastewater to the ground or discharge of wastewater, other than domestic sewage, to municipal treatment plant requires a State Waste Discharge Permit. Discharges from industrial facilities to municipal wastewater treatment plants require a State Waste Discharge Permit if they haven't been issued a Pretreatment Discharge Permit by the municipality. Download the application for an individual permit here.	Washington State Department of Ecology Water Quality Program 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-6400 (360) 407-6426 fax
Water Resource Permits	Permit to Withdraw or Divert Surface or Ground Water: Washington State law requires certain users of public waters to receive approval from the state prior to use of the water - in the form of a Water Right Permit or certificate. Any use of surface of water (lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, or springs) which began after the state water code was enacted in 1917 requires a Water-Right Permit or certificate. Likewise, ground-water withdrawals from 1945 onward, when the state ground-water code was enacted, require a Water-Right Permit or certificate. Refer to the Ecology website for complete information about this permit, including allowable exceptions.	Washington State Department of Ecology Water Resources Program 300 Desmond Drive PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600 (360) 407-6600 (360) 407-7162 fax
Wetland Permits	Wetlands: If you anticipate working in lands that are transitional between open water and uplands or that may be periodically inundated or saturated, you may be dealing with wetlands. Wetlands perform numerous important functions including water quality improvement, flood peak reduction, and stream and groundwater recharge while providing essential fish and wildlife habitat. Numerous federal, state, and local laws affect the use and protection of wetlands.	Washington State Department of Ecology 300 Desmond Drive Lacey, WA 98503 (360) 407-6000

2.13 Public Notification

The requirements for notifying the public of improvements being made to the street right-of-way varies among permit types. Specific notification requirements, if they exist, are indicated under the applicable permit type. It is the responsibility of the applicant to know and understand the public notification requirements.

2.14 Contact Information

Organization Name/Website	Phone
Department of Neighborhoods (DON) Landmarks Certificate of Approval	(206) 684-0228
Department of Planning and Development (DPD)	
DPD Applicant Services Center and Permit Specialists	(206) 684-8850
DPD Drainage and Sewer Review Staff	(206) 684-5362
DPD Land Use Planner	(206) 684-8850
DPD Public Resource Center Seattle Municipal Tower 700 5th Avenue, 20th Floor	(206) 684-8467
DPD Site Development Staff	(206) 684-8860
DPD Transportation Impact Analysis and Parking Demand Studies	(206) 684-5837
King County Waste Discharge Permits	(206) 263-3001
Seattle City Light (SCL) Engineering Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential and Commercial Customers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - North of Denny Way (206) 615 0600 - South of Denny Way (206) 386-4200 Large commercial and Industrial Customer: (206) 233-7177 	
SCL Distribution Design Office for Pole Attachments	(206) 233-2777
SCL Real Estate Services Division for Wireless Antenna Attachments	(206) 684-3324
SDOT Arborist's Office	(206) 684-TREE (8733)
SDOT Shorelines Street Ends Program	(206) 684-5283
SDOT Street and Alley Vacations	(206) 684-7564
SDOT Street Use Division	(206) 684-5283
SDOT Street Use Permit Counter Seattle Municipal Tower 700 5th Avenue, Suite 3700 (37th Floor)	(206) 684-5253
SDOT Street Use Utility Permit Specialist	(206) 684-5193
SDOT Urban Forestry Office	(206) 684-TREE (8733)
Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) General Information	(206) 684-3000
Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR)	(206) 233-7935
SPR Design Standards	(206) 233-7920
SPR Property Management Unit	(206) 233-7935
Utility Underground Location Center and One Number Locator Service Hotline	(800) 424-5555

searchable by Department, Division and individual staff.