



Background

Seattle's development regulations are complex and they are written to regulate the full range of development that is possible throughout the city. Numerous codes and regulations apply to development, and some are administered by different city and county agencies. The origin of each regulation may also differ, from protecting the health of the general public, to protecting neighboring properties, to protecting city owned infrastructure and assets. These differences can sometimes result in disputes about how a code or regulation applies to a development, and the disputes may involve multiple departments with differing opinions about how to resolve the situation.



City of Seattle
Department of Construction
and Inspections
www.seattle.gov/sdci

Resolving Interdepartmental Disagreements in Development Permitting

The City of Seattle is committed to continuously improving our customer service and responsiveness. Stakeholders like you have told us that quickly clearing up disagreements about the permit process and policy or technical code issues will reduce delays in permitting. We know that it is sometimes difficult to achieve the right balance between flexibility and predictability, especially when there are conflicting regulations or more than one city department enforcing regulations.

With that in mind, we are providing you with information about who to contact when you are experiencing a disagreement about development requirements that involve more than one city department. Our goal is to review each unique situation and to promptly confer between departments to address disagreements you may have about how your development proposal is proceeding or how the code applies to your project.

How to Resolve a Permit Disagreement

STEP

1

Work with City staff & Supervisors

If you are experiencing a development problem where multiple city regulations conflict or more than one city staff disagrees about how to apply a development regulation, you should first try to resolve the situation with the city staff directly. We suggest sending an email to all parties involved, explain the conflict or situation and ask the city staff to discuss the disagreement. An alternative might be to request a meeting with the various parties to discuss the situation in person. You may also want to include staff supervisors in these discussions, in order to help ensure that staff is given the support they need to resolve the situation in a timely manner. The staff and supervisors will talk with you about your disagreement, reviewing the circumstances with you and the assigned staff. After appropriate consideration—usually within 3-5 days—the supervisors will provide an answer.

Details on back...

How to Resolve a Permit Disagreement, cont.

City Management Contacts

Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections

- **Land Use Code, Master Use Permits or building permits:**
 - Roberta Baker, Land Use Director
(206) 684-8195 or roberta.baker@seattle.gov
- **Building permit ordinance/structural, energy, drainage, side sewer and geotechnical reviews:**
 - Andy Higgins, Engineering Services Director
(206) 615-0568 or andy.higgins@seattle.gov
- **Construction inspection issues:**
 - Dave Cordaro, Chief Building Inspector
(206) 684-7933 or dave.cordaro@seattle.gov

Seattle Public Utilities

- **Code-required main extensions for sewer, water, drainage:**
 - Hari Ponnekanti, SPU Plan Review Manager
(206) 684-5919 or hari.ponnekanti@seattle.gov
- **System capacity or point of discharge for side sewer:**
 - Hari Ponnekanti, SPU Plan Review Manager
(206) 684-5919 or hari.ponnekanti@seattle.gov

Seattle City Light

- Ben Rushwald, Electrical Service Engineering Manager
(206) 733-9830 or benjamin.rushwald@seattle.gov

Seattle Department of Transportation

- **Street Improvement Permits & Construction Inspection Issues:**
 - Liz Sheldon, Operations Manager
(206) 684-7945 or elizabeth.sheldon@seattle.gov
- **Street Use and Utility Permitting and Review:**
 - Angela Steel, Right-of-Way Management Manager
(206) 684-5967 or angela.steel@seattle.gov
- **Traffic Management Systems and Operations:**
 - John Marek, Acting Manager, Transportation Operations Engineering and Design
(206) 684-5069 or john.marek@seattle.gov
- **Parking and Curb Space Management:**
 - Mike Estey, Parking Program Manager
(206) 684-8132 or mike.estey@seattle.gov

STEP 2 Contact Department Management

If the supervisor's answer is one that you continue to disagree with and you feel the decision does not correctly apply to your project, you may request review of the issue by writing to appropriate city management. Conflicts involving more than one department are often complicated by competing city policies or priorities, so we encourage you to contact all affected management contacts at the same time, preferably in writing (email is a good method). To help ensure a timely response from the city, you should provide the following information in your communication:

- The development site address
- City Permit numbers for any work that is being disputed
- Names of city staff that you have been working with to resolve the situation
- Describe any unique circumstances that you believe influence the outcome of decisions
- Refer to the specific regulations, with code citations, that are in dispute.

The managers may discuss the circumstances with you and will decide who will act as the lead contact for this dispute. They will also confer with assigned staff and supervisors to gain a full understanding of the situation and will talk with management from other involved city departments. After conferring, a written response will be made by the lead city manager, usually within two weeks of the request, unless additional, time-consuming research, analysis or discussion is required. (The manager will let you know within a week of your request, if extra work will be needed. After appropriate consideration, the managers will provide an answer.

STEP 3 Contact the Directors

We want to assist you as much as possible should a disagreement arise. If, after following the above process, you are still not satisfied that you have been given the highest of quality service, feel free to contact our department Directors.

City Directors Contacts

Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections

- Nathan Torgelson, Department Director
(206) 684-0343 or nathan.torgelson@seattle.gov

Seattle Department of Transportation

- Liz Sheldon, Interim Street Use Division Director
(206) 684-7945 or elizabeth.sheldon@seattle.gov
- Scott Kubly, Department Director
(206) 684-5000 or scott.kubly@seattle.gov

Seattle Public Utilities

- Henry Chen, Engineering Technical Services Director
(206) 615-0563 or henry.chen@seattle.gov
- Vladimir Khazak, Project Delivery Branch Director
(206) 684-7935 or vladimir.khazak@seattle.gov
- Ray Hoffman, Utilities Director
(206) 684-5852 or ray.hoffman@seattle.gov

Seattle City Light

- Kelly Enright, Customer Care Director
(206) 684-3111 or kelly.enright@seattle.gov
- Jim Baggs, City Light Interim Director
(206) 684-3200 or james.baggs@seattle.gov