

Seattle Permits

— part of a multi-departmental City of Seattle series on getting a permit

Right-of-Way Improvements Manual (ROWIM) Web Site

Revised April 22, 2010

The Seattle Department of Transportation has nationally recognized, easy to use online tools to aid in the early planning of new development that is adjacent to the public right-of-way. The Right-of-Way Improvements Manual (ROWIM) is an on-line resource developed to help property owners, developers, architects, landscape architects, and engineers involved with the design, permitting and construction of improvements to Seattle's rights-of-way.

The ROWIM incorporates the City of Seattle's Land Use Code requirements (Title 23 of the Seattle Municipal Code) with the guidelines for constructing street and alley improvements and presents specific criteria for design and installation (Title 15 of the Seattle Municipal Code). In addition, the ROWIM also includes additional guidelines and references for doing work in the street right-of-way including information on project permitting, construction requirements and streetscape design guidelines.

[Chapter 1 - Introduction](#)

The introductory chapter provides an overview of the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual's purpose and defines the authority, responsibilities and roles of the various City departments that have oversight of the street right-of-way. This chapter also includes information on the relationship between the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual and other regulations and guidelines.

[Chapter 2 – Procedures for Permitting](#)

Navigating the City of Seattle Permit process can be challenging. This chapter is designed to help applicants understand the process for preparing permits for street right-of-way improvements. These include resources to guide the applicant through the environmental review, design review or historic district review processes, as well as the steps needed to prepare a permit application. Permit forms and other helpful tools are also included and can be downloaded directly from this site.

[Chapter 3 - Street Right-of-Way Improvement Requirements](#)

This chapter summarizes the City of Seattle's Land Use Code requirements (SMC Title 23) for street and alley improvements. It explains the incorporation of required street and alley improvements based on the Land Use designation and how other City ordinances are to be incorporated into the design of the improvements. These requirements are summarized in a series of tables and drawings for easy reference.

The information in this chapter constitutes a set of requirements that are officially adopted by the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual and compliance is not optional.

[Chapter 4 - Design Criteria](#)

Chapter 4 provides technical information and design criteria for specific elements of the street right-of-way, such as grading, pavement type and depth, street tree placement and utility locations. Design criteria have been established so that streets and sidewalks used by the public and

www.seattle.gov/transportation



page 2

maintained with public funds will meet standards for operating efficiency, and will hold up to long-term use with minimum maintenance and repair. These requirements and criteria pertain to streets and alleys that are under the jurisdiction of the Seattle Department of Transportation. The requirements also pertain to private streets and alleys that serve development projects.

The information in this chapter constitutes a set of requirements that are officially adopted by the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual; compliance with these standards is not optional.

[Chapter 5 - Construction and Maintenance](#)

In many cases, construction and maintenance in the street right-of-way will require one or more permits, especially if a street or street right-of-way closure is proposed. The City of Seattle issues permits for the construction of improvements in the street right-of-way and inspects new improvements, including roadway and utility work and the installation of street trees and landscaping. The City also works proactively to coordinate utility work within the street right-of-way to make the most efficient use of resources and minimize the impacts to the traveling public.

[Chapter 6 - Streetscape Design Guidelines](#)

This final chapter describes design guidelines that are of interest to project applicants, but do not represent requirements. Many are neighborhood specific, such as Green Streets, light rail station area plans and streetscape design concept plans. Others define City programs that apply to street rights-of-way but are not required, such as traffic calming and natural drainage system guidelines.

Web Links

Right-of-Way Improvements Manual:

<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/rowmanual/manual/>

City of Seattle Standard Plans and Specifications for Road, Bridge and Municipal Construction:

[http://www.seattle.gov/util/Engineering/Standard Plans & Specs/index.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/util/Engineering/StandardPlans&Specs/index.asp)

Seattle Department of Transportation Street Use Client Assistance Memos:

http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/stuse_docs.htm#CAMS

City of Seattle Traffic Control Manual for In-Street Work:

<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/trafficcontrolmanual.htm>

Seattle Department of Transportation Pavement Opening and Restoration Rule (PORR):

www.seattle.gov/transportation/docs/dr_spor5-2009.pdf