

Seattle Permits

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

Development Site Permitting Guidelines

December 16, 2016

All applications for Land Use and Construction permits need to be reviewed by staff with expertise in various Seattle codes. It is important for all staff to review each project using the same property boundaries, known as a “development site.” This is important to properly conform to code requirements, to provide consistency to applicants and the public, and to allow property records to be easily accessible.

Most of our codes, including the land use, building, fire, electrical, stormwater, and water codes, are based on the concept of having a “development site,” though these codes call it something else. For instance, the Electrical Code calls out a “premise,” the Fire Code calls out a “site,” and the Building Code calls out a “lot.”

What is a Development Site?

A “development site” is a piece of land within the boundaries of which we apply all the development standards for the land use, building, and electrical code (at a minimum). The development site concept is not new; it has been the standard for evaluating proposals for all applicable codes for decades.

How do I Create a Development Site?

A development site may already exist from prior permitting, or you may create one through our platting or building permit process. You must have an existing development site before you can submit your permit application or early design guidance application. A development site is considered to be existing for permit application purposes if it is platted with a recording number or if a platting action or lot boundary adjustment is currently under review in the department.

- If you are going to create or reconfigure a develop-

ment site through a subdivision or lot boundary adjustment process, you may submit your land use and building permit applications for the proposed development sites after we have accepted your platting action. Your subsequent permit application plans must show only the proposed development site, and must show how you will meet all code requirements within the proposed development site. Your platting action must be issued before we issue your land use or building permit for the proposed development site.

- If you are creating a development site through a platting process, that plat or lot boundary adjustment must be recorded before you can submit any additional platting actions.
- SDCI requires that all platting actions or lot boundary adjustments go through our Pre-Application Tool (PAT) process. The Pre-Application Tool allows all reviewers to evaluate permitting requirements for the new proposed development site. (If we have conducted a pre-application site visit (PASV) covering the entire site within 18 months of the platting application a new PASV will not be necessary.)
- If you will further subdivide your development site into 9 or more parcels of land within a 5-year period, you must go through the full subdivision process.

Utilities For Development Sites

You should contact the utilities early on to ensure that you have designed your final development site with adequate space for utility access and design. Not accounting for existing utilities in the right-of-way or future utilities needed for the development site may cause significant delays in the review process and costly service connections.

Live-Work Units

If you are proposing a site for the development of live-work units, SDCI will apply development standards

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to the larger parcel before the platting of the units for individual sale. In most cases, you can subsequently divide development sites with live-work units by a short or full subdivision process to allow future sale of individual units. However, the entire property will still be considered one development site. These subsequent subdivisions may require a binding site covenant or other means to clarify the relationship of each owner to the larger development site. For more information, contact our Addressing/Development Site Team at sci_addressing@seattle.gov.

Access to Information

Links to SDCI Tips, Director's Rules, and the Seattle Land Use Code are available on our website at www.seattle.gov/sdci.