

## Development Services Department Frequently Asked Questions

### ***When Is A Survey Required?***

For new structures or additions, accurate property line location is required so the Building Inspector can verify building setbacks would meet or exceed the minimum distance allowed per the Zoning Code. Property corner survey pins must be located and visible. For buildings close to any setback line, it may be necessary to run a string line run between surveyed corners. Typically, foundation footings may go into the setback area, but the foundation walls and exterior building wall may not extend beyond the minimum setbacks. Roof eaves may extend into the setback area a maximum of two feet.

### **Land Use Permits**

Short Plats, Long Plats and Binding Site Plans require survey drawings. Lot Line Adjustments involving complex drawings or property descriptions, including but not limited to proposed lot reorientations, require drawings by a licensed surveyor unless otherwise waived by the Development Services director. When no change in property lines is proposed, temporary stakes must be set when existing structure(s) are located close to any minimum front, side and/or rear setback. If the property is vacant or the City determines there is no question regarding the location of existing structures, the applicant may prepare the initial drawing. Some critical area permits (including but not limited to wetlands) may require survey work to indicate locations of critical areas and their associated buffers.

### **Street Development Permits - Extending Water, Sewer and/or Streets**

A survey is required for the extension or improvement of water or sewer lines, stormwater and/or streets within any City right-of-way.

**TO FIND OUT IF A SURVEY HAS BEEN DONE:** If the property owner's name and approximate year of a past survey is known, contact the Jefferson County Auditor's Office at 385-9115 or visit their office on the 2nd floor of the Courthouse, the large brick building with the clock tower at the intersection of Jefferson and Walker streets.

**LICENSED SURVEYORS** may be found in the phone book under "Surveyor's-Land" or "Engineers - Civil." According to the Washington State law, only licensed Professional Land Surveyors licensed by the Washington Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors may advertise land-surveying services. Go to the State site at <https://fortress.wa.gov/dol/dolprod/bpdLicenseQuery/> "land surveyors" for a list and status of all Land Surveyors licensed in the State of Washington.

To get a very general idea of your property, you may start with a recorded survey from a neighboring property, or look at fence lines and setbacks of neighboring properties. Power poles can be an indication of the street edge as they are usually located on the right of way. Aerial photos can be helpful, but are not dependable for accuracy. If you are unsure of minimum setbacks for your property, please inquire while you are still in the planning stages and before you submit any plans.

### ***How Can I Get More Information Prior to Submitting an Application?***

The [Development Services Department](#) offers various opportunities to gather information.

**Over the Counter Assistance (free of charge):** Walk-in inquiries are welcome during normal business hours. Our staff can provide you with basic information on zoning, mapped critical areas, building, and infrastructure. If you require more detailed information than we can provide in a brief conversation at the counter, you may request a Customer Assistance Meeting.

**Customer Assistance Meetings (CAMs) (fee applies)** - This service is offered to property owners or prospective business owners (if site specific, you will need to have property owner's permission). CAMs are a great tool for citizens to casually sit down with staff members and get general answers to questions they may have regarding the permit process and what might be required of them. The process is especially helpful for people building a home for the first time. A simple one-page application is submitted with a site plan of your proposal, showing proposed access, building footprint, and proposed utility connections. You do not need formal plans at this point. Upon receipt of the request form, a planner will call to schedule a meeting. Our goal is to meet within 14 calendar days of the request. There are no formal notes or minutes produced from the Customer Assistance Meeting, so you will need to take your own notes at the meeting. When the meeting is over, you should have a clear idea of what steps to take to proceed with your project.

**PreApplication Meetings (fee applies)** - Preapplication meetings are required prior to submittal of certain types of permit applications (including but not limited to subdivisions, critical areas permits, and conditional use permits). The purpose of the preapplication conference is to acquaint the applicant with the requirements of the Port Townsend Municipal Code and to allow the director/staff to provide the applicant with preliminary comments based upon the applicant's preliminary sketch of the proposal. Once an application is received, a meeting is scheduled with pertinent staff, which may include planner, stormwater engineer, public works development specialist, and/or building official. A written report is provided at the conference or within 7 calendar days following the conference.

**Technical Conference (fee applies)** - If your questions are specific to public works requirements, a technical conference may be scheduled. Such conferences are strongly encouraged and may be required by the public works director when utilities are to be extended or new streets installed. Project requirements identified during the technical conference shall remain valid for a period of one year from the date of the review, unless changes are made to the proposed development, in which case requirements related to those changes may be modified.

*It is impossible for staff to provide an exhaustive review of all potential issues. With the exception of written information provided by the technical conference, information provided by staff shall not bind or prohibit the city's future application or enforcement of all applicable laws and ordinances. No statements or assurances made by city representatives shall in any way relieve the applicant of his or her duty to submit an application consistent with all relevant requirements of city, county, state, and federal codes, laws, regulations and land use plans.*

If you have any questions about any of the above processes, please call Development Services at 360-379-5095.

### ***What Happens to My Building Permit After I Submit the Application?***

After your application is received by Development Services, it gets a quick review in the first couple of days to make sure that it is complete and we have everything we need to proceed with plan review.

Once the application is determined to be complete, it goes into the queue to be reviewed. Depending on how many applications are ahead of yours, review should be completed within 2 to 4 weeks.

You will then get a phone call from the department letting you know that your application has been approved, and the remaining fees that are due. It is up to you to then pick up your permit at your convenience. No work may begin without having the approved plans and permit on-site.

Some permits require a pre-construction meeting before starting work.

### ***How Long Will It Take to Get a Building Permit?***

It depends on what you are applying for! If you don't find the answer you're looking for below, please call Development Services at 360-379-5095 for help.

- New Single-Family Residence: 3 to 4 weeks, depending on what time of year you apply. The fall and winter months are somewhat slower so review may be faster. The spring and summer months are the busiest and it could take the 4 weeks, sometimes a bit longer, depending on the number of applications to review.
- Addition or Renovation to an Existing Residence: 2 to 4 weeks, depending on the size or complexity of the addition/renovation.
- New Fence, Deck, Storage Building: Small projects like these usually take approximately a week to issue.
- New Residential Roof: These are issued the same day, over the counter.
- New Propane Tank and/or Gas Appliance: These are issued the same day, over the counter.
- New Commercial Building: 4 to 8 weeks, depending on the complexity of the project and if additional reports or information are required.
- Commercial Addition or Renovation: 3 to 5 weeks, again depending on the complexity of the project and if additional reports or information are required.
- Commercial Roof: About 1 week.
- Connecting to Utilities, Extending a Street: 2 to 4 weeks, depending on the complexity of the project.