

## About Development Permits

In certain parts of the Municipality, there are areas designated as Development Permit Areas (DPA's). Development Permits allow the Municipality to manage the types of development that occur in specific areas. Unique development guidelines apply in each of these Development Permit Areas. These guidelines reflect certain objectives including:

- *To regulate the form and character of commercial, industrial, and multi-family developments.*
- *To protect natural environment.*
- *To prevent hazardous conditions.*
- *To revitalize specific commercial areas.*
- *To promote energy conservation, water conservation and greenhouse gas reductions.*
- *Protection of farming.*

### The Municipality has designated the following DPA's:

- DPA-1      General**  
Applies to new multi-family, commercial or industrial development.
- DPA-2      Marine Waterfronts**  
Applies to new multi-family, commercial or industrial developments that are proposed to be located 100m above the natural boundary of the foreshore.
- DPA-3      Natural Environment**  
Applies to development within an environmentally sensitive area.
- DPA-4      Hazard Lands**  
Applies to development on lands with steep slopes over 20%, lands vulnerable to interface wildfire, lands on floodplains and coastal lands.
- DPA-5      Farm Land Protection**  
Applies to development proposed within 30m of any property situated within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).

You may apply for a Building Permit and begin construction in a Development Permit Area only after obtaining a Development Permit. The Director of Development Services or an approved Designated Municipal Officer will issue a Development Permit for a proposed project when satisfied it meets all guidelines and conditions. These guidelines and conditions appear in the Official Community Plan.

## When to Apply for a Development Permit

A Development Permit is required for the following activities unless specifically exempted in the DPA Guidelines:

- A)** Alteration of land, disturbance of soils, including grubbing, scraping and removal of top soils;

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- B)** Construction or erection of buildings and structures
- C)** Creation of non-structural impervious or semi-pervious surfaces; and or
- D)** Subdivision of land.

## Period of Validity

A Development Permit lapses when construction has not substantially commenced within two years of its date of issue. If your Permit lapses, you must submit a new Development Permit application, and repeat the process.

If you wish to amend a valid Development Permit, a Development Permit Amendment application should be submitted for minor changes to an existing proposal.

## Applying for a Development Permit

### Step 1: Pre-Application Meeting

Before submitting your proposal, a pre-application meeting and site visit of the subject property should be arranged with a Planner. The meeting will help to determine what supporting documents, reports, etc. will be needed. The Planner will provide you with a checklist of items that will be necessary to make a complete application and provide you with the correct fee amount that accompanies your proposal.

### Step 2: Submitting an Application

Submit your plan, and application along with the application fee. Application forms are available from the Development Services Department or through the municipality's website [www.northcowichan.ca](http://www.northcowichan.ca).

Your application and supporting documentation may be returned if your application is incomplete and/or if fees are unpaid - refer to the checklist provided to you by the Planner.

***Additional information may be requested, following an application review.***

### Step 3: Application Review

Once Development Services receives your complete application, a file is started and it is circulated to other departments and agencies for review. During this process, these departments/agencies will review the application and provide the Planner with feedback as to what is required in order to move forward with the development. This information is compiled into a Detailed Team Review letter which may require clarification, further information, or plan revisions. If further information is required, you will need to provide it within 30 days to keep your file active. If no further information is required, your application can proceed to a decision.

### Step 4: Decision

There are two approval streams in the Development Permit process. If your Development Permit requires



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variances then only Council has the authority to determine your application. If there are no variances required then the authority to determine your application is delegated to the Director of Development Services.

## Permit Issuance

Once the designated Approving Officer approves your Development Permit, you must demonstrate that you can meet all of its conditions (e.g. submitting a Letter of Credit to secure landscaping obligations). Your Permit will then be prepared, signed and issued. Development Services will file the permit with Land Title Office. The title of the property will then carry a notice stating that a development permit applies to your property. The Permit will refer to all the plans associated with your project. Plans are filed in the Municipal Office and referred to when you apply for your Building Permit.

## How Long It Takes

An application that is correct and complete can be processed in six weeks (42 days) depending on Staff workloads at the time of submission.

## Remember ...

Plan your development proposal thoroughly and carefully. In preparing your proposal, you should be aware of the Municipality's plans, policies and regulations that may affect your property, including:

### Official Community Plan

North Cowichan's Official Community Plan (OCP) divides the municipality into designated land use areas. Check the OCP for your property's designation. If the activity you propose is not permitted by the OCP, then you must apply for an OCP Amendment and receive approval before your zoning amendment application can be considered.

### Development Permit Area Guidelines


Community Plan contains specific design guidelines that affect your application. You may review development area maps and guidelines through the municipality's website [www.northcowichan.ca](http://www.northcowichan.ca) or visit the Development Services Department.

### Works and Services

All developments must include utilities (e.g. sewer and water) at the developer's expense. Check with the Development Services and Engineering Departments on the availability of the required services, and whether additional servicing is necessary.

### Zoning Bylaw

Zoning regulations apply to every property in the municipality. In each zone, specific uses and activities are permitted. Check the bylaw to determine the zoning regulations that apply to your application. The use and density of a site cannot be varied by a Development Variance Permit.



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