

Step-By-Step Development Process Overview

Development Services Department

City Asheville



Step 1

Define Project

The process for obtaining a permit depends on the scope of your project. Learn [more about the different type of permits](#) needed for your project including stand-alone trade, multi-trade, small commercial, and large commercial review.

Residential Projects: Single family construction projects that include land disturbance, new construction or addition on to an existing structure, or significant renovation to structures will require some plan review by more than one department.

Commercial Projects: Multifamily, commercial, industrial, or institutional construction projects involve more complex code requirements for both building and site elements. These projects involve multiple functions in the plan review process, such as building safety, planning, and the Fire Marshal's office. Depending upon a variety of factors like change of use, vacancy, or construction value, a more detailed site review may be required per the City's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). These entitlement processes are briefly described below:

- **Level I:** If your project is less than 35,000 square feet or less than 20 residential units, it is called a Level I project. All projects that require plan review must comply with local zoning regulations. Begin the development process by obtaining specific information about your site, including zoning requirements, by scheduling a pre-application conference.
- **Level II · Level III · Major Subdivisions · Conditional Zoning:** Projects above 35,000 square feet or more than 20 residential units fall within this category. These projects are required to begin the development process by scheduling a pre-application conference. Contact the Technical Review coordinator for more information for larger projects.

Water Availability: One of the first steps in the development process is to determine if there is enough water capacity for your proposed development. It is important to begin your Water Availability Application ([Large Projects](#) / [Small Projects](#)) early because a "letter of water commitment availability" is needed before you apply for other permits.

Permit Addressing: New construction projects can be assigned street addresses before or at the time of application. The Emergency Address Coordinator is responsible for street name and street number addressing for all new development within the City of Asheville. The Emergency Address Coordinator also helps to make necessary corrections of existing street addresses. The street address information is the backbone to the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. It is important you have your correct address number properly posted on your house or business. In case of an emergency, it will help Emergency Responders find your location. The Emergency Address Coordinator's office is located within the Development Services Department at 161 South Charlotte Street. To verify you are using and posting your number correctly, please contact the Emergency Address Coordinator at 828-251-4004.

Step 2

Apply For Permits

After you have determined the type of your project, a permit facilitator assists you in determining the plans required for submitting your permit application.

- **Stand Alone · Multi-Trade · Level I:** Permit facilitators in the Permit Application Center assist with permit applications for all small projects and Level I projects including [Single Family Residential Development \(One- and Two-Family\)](#) and [Commercial & Multi-Family Development](#) .
[Stand Alone, Multi-trade, and Residential Reroof permits](#) can be applied for through the [Development, Permit, & Inspection Portal](#) (and are issued at application) or via email.
- **Level II · Level III · Subdivisions · Conditional Zoning:** The Technical Review coordinator assists with permit applications for larger projects including commercial and multi-family, [subdivisions](#), and [zoning review](#).

Environmental & Engineering: Depending on the scope of your project, you may be required to apply for [Environmental & Engineering Permits](#) including grading, stormwater and driveway. Your permit facilitator can help determine if these permits apply to your project.

Step 3

Plan review

Once you submit your permit application, maps, construction documents, and plans included with your application are reviewed by technical experts to ensure compliance with development codes and regulations. As each reviewer completes the review, he or she will either "sign-off" on the approval or return marked-up plans with comments to the customer for revisions. When the necessary approvals are obtained, you will receive a permit to begin work. Learn more about specific types of review including [Design Review](#), [Site Plan Review](#), [Building Review](#), [Grading & Erosion Control Review](#), [Stormwater Review](#) and [Waterline Review](#).

- **Level I:** These projects are subject to ministerial plan review, which means that are reviewed and approved at a city staff level. [Level I Application Checklist](#) (>10,000 square feet) and [Level I Sketch Plan Checklist](#) (<10,000 square feet).
- **Level II (35,000-100,000 square feet or 20-50 multi-family units):** Level II projects are reviewed by city staff, the [Technical Review Committee](#), and the [Planning and Zoning Commission](#).
- **Level III Projects (above 100,000 square feet or 50 units) & Major Subdivisions:** Level III projects are reviewed by city staff, the [Technical Review Committee](#), the [Planning & Zoning Commission](#) and [Asheville City Council](#). This process provides multiple opportunities for public input including a public hearing.

[Residential Building Plan Review Waiver](#): Building code plan review is not required by state law for one and two family dwellings. We provide this compliance review as a service to the public. If the scope of work is limited to interior renovations or reroof; work is being done by a licensed General Contractor; or plans and details for the project have been produced under the responsible care of a NC licensed design professional (architect or engineer), you can choose to waive the building review service. Signing this waiver ideally results in faster issuance of the required permits.

You can track your application status through the [Development, Permit, & Inspection Portal](#).

Step 4

Inspections

All construction that requires a permit must be inspected and approved before it is covered, occupied, or placed into use.

Inspections can be scheduled using the [Development, Permit, & Inspection Portal](#). To learn how and when inspections should be scheduled: [Zoning Inspections](#), [Building Inspections](#), [Grading, Erosion Control & Driveway Inspections](#), [Fire Inspections](#), and [Waterline Inspections](#).

Step 5

Project Close-out & Occupancy

When construction work is complete and inspected, the Development Services Department issues Certificates of Occupancy, which must be obtained before a building is occupied. Certificates of Occupancy cannot be issued until all of the required inspections are complete and the project passes its final inspection.

- **Temporary Certificate of Occupancy:** A Temporary Certificate of Occupancy may be issued when a building official finds that no substantial hazard will result from occupancy of any structure (or portion thereof) before all work is completed to allow for occupancy. A Certificate of Occupancy is required upon completion of the remainder of the work.
- **Certificate of Occupancy:** Issued when all work for which the building permit was issued is complete and has had all final inspections.