



## Commercial Development Plan Review

### **The Purpose of Plan Review**

Plans are reviewed to ensure compliance with the City of Columbia's adopted codes, ordinances, and policies for commercial, subdivision, and multifamily residential development. The review focuses primarily on public safety issues, compliance with final development plans and plats, the development's effect on existing and proposed public infrastructure, impact on neighboring properties, and ensuring sound engineering principles. In particular, the International Building Code states that the purpose of code enforcement is to protect life, health, safety, welfare, and property as well as fire fighters and emergencies responders during emergencies. Although the staff reviews plans for these issues, the ultimate responsibility for the construction documents rests with the design professionals. Construction plan review minimizes field changes because it necessitates interpretation of standards prior to the construction occurring, thereby saving time and expense for both the City and developer.

The review process will also carry forward any stipulations set forth by City Council during the planning process. Approvals necessary from outside agencies such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, or Missouri Department of Transportation may also be required at this step prior to the issuance of a permit. Coordination with other agencies is the responsibility of the developer and/or his or her agents.

Construction plan review must be completed prior to issuance of a permit and the start of construction.

For an overview of how the plan review process is completed please refer to the "Commercial Development Plan Review Flow Chart" included with this document.

### **Timeframes for Plan Review**

For new construction, the City has established a goal of completing the initial review within ten (10) working days and subsequent reviews within five (5) working days. "Day 1" begins when the plans have been accepted for review through the Initial Screening Process (ISP). Our goal is to process plans through ISP the next working day after plans have been submitted. When workload is heavy and plans are submitted late in the day, it may occasionally take two working days to move plans through ISP. The staff will make every effort to accelerate the review of revisions prior to starting new projects, especially when the number of plan review comments is low. *All specifications and drawings must be submitted at one time and from one source to begin the process of being accepted for review.*



## **Plan Review Responsibilities**

All submittals must be accompanied by a completed construction permit and plan review application. Drawings must be submitted on 24" x 36" sheets with the exception of fire sprinkler and fire alarm plans which may be submitted 30" x 42" sheets. Depending on the type of project, one or more of the following agencies may be involved in the review of your project.

Planning – Reviews plans for compliance with development occurring in “planned” and “overlay” zoning districts as well as those that may have special development conditions imposed by Council-approved development agreements. If your project is located in one of these areas the Planning Divisions requires **one set** of construction plans to be submitted for review.

Site Development – Responsible for the review of onsite and offsite improvements that relates to the following categories:

- Traffic
- Land disturbance
- Storm drainage
- Stream corridors
- Stormwater detention
- Water quality
- Floodplain development
- Public street or storm sewer improvements
- Sidewalks and drive approaches
- Erosion and sediment control
- Tree Preservation
- Landscaping
- Sanitary sewer construction

The Site Development Section of the Building and Site Development Division requires that **four (4) sets** of construction plans be submitted for review for all projects. Site Development will coordinate the review of dumpster pad locations with the Solid Waste Division internally. Site Development will also coordinate the review of the construction plans with the Transit and Environmental Divisions of the Public Works Department. No additional plan sets are required.

Building Safety – Responsible for the review of building and site plans for compliance with the following:

- International Building Code
- International Mechanical Code
- International Plumbing Code
- International Fuel Gas Code



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- International Energy Conservation Code
- International Property Maintenance Code
- International Electrical Code
- National Electrical Code
- ICC/ANSI A117.1 – Accessible and Usable Building and Facilities Code

The Building Safety Section of the Building and Site Development Division requires that **two (2) sets** of construction plans be submitted for review for all projects.

Fire Department – Responsible for the review of the plans for compliance with the adopted fire codes and referenced standards, specifically in the following areas:

- International Fire Code
- All Referenced Standards
- Fire Sprinkler Systems
- Fire Alarm Systems
- Fire Suppression Systems
- Coiling Fire Door/Shutter Assemblies
- Above Ground or Underground Storage Tanks
- Fire lane placement
- Fire flow requirements
- Fire hydrant placement
- Hazardous materials use or storage

The Fire Department requires that **one set** of construction documents be submitted for review of new construction and remodel projects. Provide **two (2)** sets of construction documents for systems such as fire sprinklers, fire alarm systems, fire suppression systems, etc.

A set of final plans in PDF format is also required to be submitted.

Sewer Utility Division – Responsible for the review of plans involving food service establishments and installations requiring grease, oil, and sand separators. The Sewer Utility Division of the Public Works Department requires that **one set** of construction plans are submitted for all projects which involve work of this nature.

Water & Light Department – Responsible for the review of plans involving the installation, upgrade, or relocation of city owned electrical and water utilities. The Water and Light Department requires **two (2) sets of paper construction plans** that include the following items:

- Panel schedules
- Watt load calculations
- Electric riser diagram
- Locations of equipment



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- Plumbing riser with meter and backflow location
- Plumbing plan view with meter and backflow location
- Total supply fixture units (demand)
- Sewer riser and plan view
- Architect floor plan
- One set of fire sprinkler system plans and calculations

Also **an electronic (AutoCAD) copy of the site plan** that includes locations of property lines, easements, buildings, pavement, and utilities both existing and proposed must be submitted for all projects.

Health Department – Responsible for the review of the plans for compliance with standards relating to the following:

- Facilities involving food and/or beverage of any type
- Operation and maintenance of public swimming pools and spas
- Tattoo parlors

The Health Department requires that **one set** of construction plans be submitted for all projects which involve work of this nature.

### **Coordination with Outside Agencies**

It is the responsibility of the developer to determine any outside agency requirements relative to their projects. The following are some of the agencies that may require contact and/or approval prior to proceeding with phases of work or obtaining permits. A complete list of utility companies, with addresses and phone numbers, is also attached in the appendix for reference.

- Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) – if the project proposes construction in or immediately adjacent to state right of way, a permit from MoDOT may be necessary → 1-888-ASK-MODOT
- Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) – if the project proposes land disturbance in excess of one acre a permit is required from MDNR → (660) 385-8000
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – if the project disturbs Waters of the U.S. or Wetlands, a permit may be necessary → (816) 389-3990
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – if the project alters the federal floodplain, a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) may be necessary → (816) 283-7061
- Missouri Division of Fire Safety (Elevator Safety Unit) – if the project includes an elevator the State Fire Marshall must be contacted to ensure that all proper permits are obtained and inspections completed → (573) 751-2263

### **Step 1 – Pre-Application Meeting**



A pre-application meeting is an informal discussion between city plan reviewers and building professionals, and is highly recommended prior to submitting construction plans for a permit. The meeting is particularly appropriate for developers, design professionals, and contractors who have minimal experience with developing in Columbia.

A pre-application meeting allows the applicant to explain issues that shaped the design of the project. At the same time, the staff can identify issues that may be addressed prior to plans being submitted. An explanation of the plan review process can be offered and the applicant can ask questions regarding Columbia's procedures.

These reviews are preliminary and the decisions may be subject to change as more information becomes available. Primary responsibility for compliance with the codes and ordinances remains the responsibility of the design professional and the contractor.

The level of detailed assistance from city staff will depend on the completeness of the information provided and the time to review the information. Final determination on any issue will be made at the time full plans are submitted.

It is important to check for conditions or stipulations attached to rezoning cases, special use permits, planned district plans, plats, or any other type of previously approved plans for the site. It is also important to note that the City does not coordinate services from utility companies outside of those which the City owns and operates (water, electric, and sanitary sewer). Contact utility companies early in the process to ensure the issuance of permits is not delayed.

A pre-application meeting can be scheduled during the City's regularly scheduled Development Review Committee (DRC) meeting. The DRC is comprised of representatives of each of the agencies participating in the plan review process and meets on a regular basis to review development related issues concerning submitted design plans. To schedule a meeting with the DRC contact the Building and Site Development Division at (573) 874-7474.

## **Step 2 – Initial Screening Process (ISP)**

Applications for building permits are submitted to the Building and Site Development Division of the Community Development Department. Plans can be delivered by hand or via mail at the following address:

Community Development Department 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
701 East Broadway  
Columbia, Missouri 65201

Prior to distribution of the plans for review by City personal, the plans enter the ISP process. This process is an initial "quick check" to determine if the plans and information submitted are sufficiently complete for a review to be performed. If the



plans are deficient, the applicant will be notified within two working days with a list of deficiencies noted. The goal of the ISP is to benefit both the developer and design professionals by reducing review time. If information necessary for plan review is omitted or insufficient, a response from the City is generated within two days instead of waiting the full review period to find out a review could not be completed. Plans are not considered to be under review until after they have been accepted through ISP. The applicant and owner will receive a fax or e-mail if the plans have been rejected.

### **Step 3 – Staff Plan Review**

After acceptance through ISP, plans are distributed to each area responsible for review. An individual from each reviewing entity is assigned to review the project and an overall project coordinator is designated to consolidate all information and make the formal response back to the applicant. Plan revisions must be accompanied by a cover letter detailing how each plan review comment has been addressed.

#### *Permit Phasing – Partial Permits*

A decision to phase permits may be made prior to the initial plan submittal or after the plans have been submitted. Permission to phase the project must be requested in writing and approved by the Director of Community Development. Once approved the requirements for each phase must be satisfied prior to proceeding to the next phase. Typical project phases include:

- Land Disturbance – clearing and earthmoving on private property (no work in the public right of way)
- Site Development – all site work up to the footing and foundation including public improvements, stormwater detention, and water quality improvements, if applicable
- Demolition
- Interior Demolition
- Building Shell
- Footings and Foundation – all site work, including footings, foundation, and base floor slab.
- Full Building Permit – all work for the project.

### **Step 3A – Public Improvements, Stormwater Detention, and Water Quality Improvements Review**

Public improvements are often required with projects that will develop areas where the City's infrastructure does not already exist or where improvements are necessary to accommodate the new development. Public improvements should be designed to meet the requirements of the latest edition of the City's Street and Storm Sewer Specifications and Standards and the City's Code of Ordinances.



Stormwater detention improvements and water quality improvements are also required. More information about these requirements can be found in the city's Stormwater Management and Water Quality Manual and Chapter 12A of the city's Code of Ordinances.

*Items required and/or reviewed prior to issuance of a permit include:*

- Plan review and inspection fee
- Right of way or easement dedication
- Legal agreements
- Access easements
- Maintenance covenants

*Examples of Public Improvements:*

- New public street
- Public street widening
- Turn lane/median modification
- New public storm or sanitary sewer
- Improvement of existing public storm or sanitary sewer
- Improvement of existing water or electric utilities

#### **Step 4 – Plan Revisions**

Plan review comments will be sent to the permit applicant and the property owner. All comments from the City will be consolidated in one letter. Individual staff members may fax or e-mail drafts of their review comments in advance of the consolidated letter to assist the designers. It is the design professional's responsibility to ensure that no part of the final letter conflicts with the draft review comments.

When all comments are addressed plans shall be resubmitted to the Building and Site Development Division using the following guidelines:

- All City review comments shall be addressed by the applicant and submitted together. Partial submittals will not be accepted.
- A cover letter explaining how each comment was addressed shall accompany the resubmittal.
- The cover letter shall use the same numbering system as the consolidated city comment letter.
- If phasing of the permit is desired and approved, responses to comments for each phase may be submitted together with a corresponding cover letter. For example, if plans were submitted for a full permit and after the first review the applicant chose to concentrate on the footing and foundation permit, all comments relative to that phase may be submitted without addressing all comments for the full permit.



City staff recommends that the applicant contact the project coordinator prior to re-submittal of revisions to discuss any questions the applicant has regarding the staff's comments in order to prevent any misunderstandings which may result in additional revisions or delays. Staff is available for meetings if so desired. Meetings can be scheduled by contacting the assigned project coordinator for the project.

### **Step 5 – Plan Approval**

When the plans meet the requirements of all City agencies, the plans will be approved and the applicant and owner will be notified. Plan approval is frequently given with stipulations which must be satisfied prior to issuance of the permit or other stages of the work, such as prior to occupancy. Pre-construction conferences may be required by the City project coordinator, if determined to be appropriate during the plan review process.

### **Step 6 – Permitting**

Even though the plans have been approved, administrative information may be required prior to issuance of a permit. After approval, the file is reviewed by a permit services representative to determine if all requested information has been received.

The permit services representative will contact the applicant to inform them of the permit fee amount and notify them of any remaining items needed. After the fees and all required information have been received, the permit will be issued. Construction may not begin until after the permit has been issued. The contractor and owner will be furnished with a list of required inspections by department, contact numbers, inspection time frames, re-inspection fee schedule, etc. at the time of permit issuance.

Items which frequently delay permit issuance include:

- Failure to comply with the fire code requirements outlined in Chapter 14 of the adopted fire code as it relates to construction sites (i.e. access, water supplies, etc.)
- Approval from outside agencies
- Approval of plans for improvements to City owned utilities
- Approval of construction plans for public improvements or stormwater detention
- Dedication of right of way and/or easements for proposed public improvements or privately maintained stormwater best management practices (BMPs)
- Legal agreements for maintenance of amenities in the right of way or privately maintained stormwater BMPs
- Approval of variances
- Plan review/inspection fees not received

### **Step 7 – Pre-Construction Meeting**



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Once the permit has been approved, customers should contact the Building and Site Development Division at (573) 874-7474 to schedule a pre-construction meeting, if required or desired.

Pre-construction meetings are designed to offer a forum where the contractor(s) and City staff can discuss the scope of the project and various procedures the contractor must adhere to. The overall intent of the meetings is to help the contractor avoid construction delays or a delay in getting an occupancy permit. Contractors should feel free to invite anyone that they want to the meetings. Generally, the project coordinator, the job superintendent, and the erosion and sediment control contractor attend the meetings.

Pre-construction meetings are facilitated by the City of Columbia project coordinator. City staff in attendance typically consists of the Building Regulations Supervisor, a Fire Department representative, and a Site Development inspector.

Staff will provide information on the overall scope of the project and discuss any special permit conditions being attached to the permit. Special conditions most often discussed relate to fire alarm drawings, fire sprinkler drawings, landscape requirements, special inspection requirements, etc. The requirements for maintaining and inspecting erosion and sediment control features are also discussed. Applicable City forms will be distributed at the meeting, as well as contact information for various individuals.



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## Appendix Utility Contacts

### 1. WATER

City of Columbia  
Water & Light Department  
P.O. Box 6015  
Columbia, Missouri 65205  
573-874-7301

Consolidated Public Water Supply District No. 1  
1500 North 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Columbia, Missouri 65201  
573-449-0324

Public Water Supply District No. 9  
391 Rangeline Road  
Columbia, Missouri 65201  
573-474-9521

### 2. ELECTRIC

City of Columbia  
Water & Light Department  
P.O. Box 6015  
Columbia, Missouri 65205  
573-874-7301

Boone Electric Cooperative  
1413 Rangeline Street  
Columbia, Missouri 65201  
573-449-4181

### 3. SANITARY SEWER

City of Columbia  
Public Works Department  
P.O. Box 6015  
Columbia, Missouri 65205  
573-874-7250

Boone County Regional Sewer District  
1314 North 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Columbia, Missouri 65201  
573-443-2774



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4. NATURAL GAS

AmerenUE  
210 Orr Street  
Columbia, Missouri 65201  
573-876-3030

5. TELEPHONE

CenturyTel  
625 Cherry Street  
Columbia, Missouri 65205  
573-886-3500

6. CABLE TELEVISION

Mediacom  
901 N. College Avenue  
Columbia, Missouri 65201  
573-443-1535

Charter Communications  
1510 Boone Industrial Drive  
Columbia, Missouri 65202  
1-888-871-4485