

CITY OF ASHLAND



Policies / Interpretations / Procedures

BD-PP-0007

PLAN REVIEW, PERMIT, AND FEE REQUIREMENTS FOR CITY PROJECTS

Policy Summary:

Clarifies plan review, permit, inspection, and fee requirements for construction projects related to City-owned structures and property.

Background:

There has been some confusion as to when permits and inspections are required for construction projects related to City-owned structures and property. There have also been questions regarding the various fees for these projects such as those for plan review, inspection services, and Systems Development Charges (SDC).

Discussion:

The specialty codes enforced by Building and Safety Division (structural, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical) are adopted by the State legislature for use throughout Oregon. Administration of these codes is delegated to local jurisdictions such as Ashland only after certain conditions are met. One of these conditions is that the codes be applied uniformly for all construction activity whether public or private. Compliance with this condition is monitored by the State Building Codes Division.

In general, all work on a plumbing system, an electrical system not controlled by a public utility, or non-portable mechanical equipment (furnaces, boilers, central heating or air conditioning units, etc.) requires a permit. Additionally, any work involving the structural support or internal configuration of a building requires a permit. This may include the installation of new doors, windows, stairs, or non-bearing partitions. The City's Land Development Code specifies that parking lots must meet certain standards and therefore must be permitted.

Inspections are required any time a permit is issued. It is normally the responsibility of the property owner to assure that all of the required inspections are requested on time. In the case of a City project, the responsibility should be delegated in writing to the contractor; that is, it should be listed as a condition of the contract.

Area contractors are very aware of the requirement for permits and inspections for construction work associated with public buildings. In the past we have received feedback from these

contractors that there seems to be a "double standard" for some City projects because no permits are obtained and no inspections are requested. We would like to dispel this perception.

There has also been a question as to whether fees should be charged for the required permits and inspections for City projects. Because the Building and Safety Division has been directed to be self-supported through the fees collected, fee schedules have been set with the assumption that the cost of each plan review and inspection will be recovered through fees. It is also recognized, however, that inter-departmental services are provided through the Facilities Master Permit process.

In addition to cost recovery, fees are assessed in the latter case for several additional reasons. First, in virtually all cases, the bids received for work on City projects include the cost of the permit. Second, those few contractors who do not include the permit fee in their bid will submit a bid which is unfairly lower than those of the other competitors. Third, an inappropriate message is sent to contractors if they are told that the City does not have to pay the required permit fees.

Systems Development Charges specifically covered in the Ashland Municipal Code. Staff does not have the ability to waive these charges; any waiver of or changes in SDC must be made by the City Council.

Policy:

1. Permit and inspection requirements for city-owned structures and property are identical to the requirements for non-city-owned structures and property.
2. Systems Development Charges are assessed as per the requirements of the Ashland Municipal Code. Any waiver or reduction of these charges must be made by the City Council.