

Development in the City is guided by the Community Plan, Zoning Bylaw, and Servicing Bylaw.

The City's Development Procedures Bylaw outlines the process for Development Approvals. You may require one or more approvals before beginning a project or applying for a Building Permit. These include:

Development Permits are required if you are planning a multi-unit residential, commercial, or industrial project, or your property is in a hazardous or environmentally sensitive Development Permit Area identified by the City's Community Plan.

Development Variance Permits or Board of Variance Decisions may be requested if you are unable to meet setbacks, height, sign, parking or servicing requirements of the City's Zoning Bylaw, Sign Bylaw, or Servicing Bylaw. You can apply to the Board of Variance if you feel compliance with the bylaw would cause undue hardship. For example, if a rock outcrop on your property makes it difficult to position a building to meet the required setbacks.

Temporary Use Permits are an option if your planned use isn't permitted under your property's zoning and is intended to be temporary or seasonal. A Temporary Use Permit may be issued for up to three (3) years and may be renewed once at the discretion of the City.

Zoning Amendments are an option if your planned use isn't permitted under your property's zoning. Your request must fit with the City's Community Plan and may sometimes need changes to the Plan. If approved, this change is permanent, unlike a Temporary Use Permit, which is only in place for a limited time.

Where Can I Find Out More

Copies of the City's Bylaws can be found at City Hall or online at castlegar.ca/bylaws. Additional information, guides, and applications are available at castlegar.ca/developmentapproval.

Application Timelines

The City aims to process development approvals as quickly as possible. Timelines vary depending on the type of application, the number of applications being processed, and available staff resources. Delays often occur when applications are incomplete, or when plans and drawings are missing information, or are of low quality.

What does a Development Approval Cost?

Fees for development approvals are set by the City's Procedures Bylaw and are paid at the time of application submission. Additional fees may include servicing, utilities, development and amenity cost charges, and performance security. These fees are usually charged when your building permit is issued.

How do I Apply?

You can make an application either in person, by mail, or by emailing Development Services at devserv@castlegar.ca. City Hall is open Monday to Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (closed on holidays), and is located at **460 Columbia Avenue, Castlegar, BC V1N 1G7**.

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REQUIRED DOCUMENTS	NOTES
Application Form	Fill out the application form. If you are not the property owner, please fill out the agent authorization section. Make sure the property owner has signed the authorization.
Agent Authorization Form	Use this form when a property has more than one owner or you need more than one approval.
Title	Provide a copy of your property title, issued by the BC Land Title Office within the past thirty (30) days.
Business Summary	If the property is owned by a company or corporation, you will need to provide a Business Summary from BC Registries.
Site Disclosure Statement Form	You must include a site disclosure statement, even if no industrial or commercial activities have taken place on the property.
Project Proposal	Provide a letter describing your project and what it will involve. Be sure to explain any benefits or potential impacts it may have on adjacent properties, City services, or local infrastructure.
Site Plan	<p>Your site plan must be drawn to scale and should clearly show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The layout of your project including setback distances from property lines and percentage of the lot your project will cover. ▪ Any required parking, landscaping, fencing or screening, signs, lighting and any other improvements. ▪ Any existing and proposed services, including water, sewer and on-site drainage systems. ▪ Any rights-of-way, easements, or restrictive covenant areas that apply to the property. <p>The City may ask for a site plan prepared by a qualified professional, like a BC Land Surveyor or draftsman.</p>
Building Plans	Building plans should be easy to read, drawn to scale and show key details like exterior dimensions, interior layout, unit numbering, floor area, and the type of exterior materials and colours you intend to use.

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<p>Additional Requirements</p>	<p>The City may require supporting documents to assist us in the review of your application. These could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traffic, geotechnical, infrastructure, or environmental assessments. ▪ Landscape plans, grading and drainage plans, servicing plans, or civic address plans. <p>Please ensure any documents you submit follow the guidelines for the specific Development Permit Area that applies to your property.</p>
<p>PROCESS FOR DEVELOPMENT PERMITS</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Property Information: Before you start planning your project, visit castlegar.ca/propertyinfo to find your property's zoning, servicing, and other key details. 2. Pre-Application Meeting: Book a meeting with City staff for guidance on application requirements and timelines at castlegar.ca/developmentapproval. 3. Submit Application: Once your application is received, it will be reviewed to make sure nothing is missing. It will be processed when all required information has been provided. 4. Application Review: Once your complete application is received, staff will review it, share it with other departments or agencies for feedback, and let you know if any additional approvals, requirements, or permit conditions—such as performance security—are required. 5. Application Consideration: Development Permits are approved by the City's Director of Community Safety & Development (or their delegate). If your application is not approved, you may request City Council to review the decision. To do this, you must submit a written request within 30 days of receiving the decision. <p>OTHER APPROVALS</p> <p>Provincial: Projects within 800 m of a controlled-access highway, commercial or industrial buildings exceeding 4,500 m², or projects affecting a heritage site may require additional Provincial approvals. To learn if your project will need a Provincial approval, contact the Ministry of Transportation & Transit (WKD@gov.ca or 250-354-6400) and the BC Archaeology Branch (archaeology@gov.bc.ca or 250-953-3334).</p> <p>Development Variances: If your project requires a variance, it will be processed as one permit. In some cases, the City may also need to notify nearby neighbours to let them know about the request. See the Development Variance Permit or Board of Variance Decision guide for more information.</p> <p>Multiple Development Permit Areas: If your property falls within more than one Permit Area, your application will need to meet the requirements of all applicable guidelines. It will be processed as one permit.</p>	
<p>ESTIMATED TIMELINES</p>	
<p>Most straightforward Development Permit applications take about 2–3 weeks to process. More complex applications may take up to two months or longer, depending on the project, and whether other approvals are needed.</p>	

The City's Community Plan has several Development Permit Areas that guide development.

There are two types:

- Environmental & Hazard (focused on protecting natural features and keeping development safe), and
- Form & Character (focused on how buildings look and fit into their surroundings).

Each Development Permit Area has its own guidelines and required documentation. To find out which guidelines apply to your property, contact Development Services or visit castlegar.ca/2033plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL & HAZARD

General Environmental & Hazard Guidelines (7.2)

These guidelines explain what kinds of professional reports may be needed when your property is in an area with environmental sensitivities or natural hazards—such as flood-prone areas, steep slopes, or locations near water or sensitive ecosystems. They outline best practices for managing stormwater, protecting plants and wildlife, use of appropriate outdoor lighting, limiting hard surfaces, and minimizing disturbance to natural watercourses and other sensitive areas.

Permit Area: Flood Hazard (7.3)

This Permit Area applies to properties within the floodplains of the Kootenay and Columbia Rivers. If your property is in this area your project must follow specific safety requirements based on the recommendations of a qualified professional.

Permit Area: Steep Slope Hazard (7.4)

Properties in the Steep Slope Hazard Development Permit Area are located on or within 30 metres of steep hillsides. This permit area helps keep people and property safe, by reducing the risk of landslides, slope failure, and protecting the natural environment. If your property is in this area, your project will need to follow the recommendations of qualified professionals and standards for landslide assessments in British Columbia.

Permit Area: Riparian & Sensitive Ecosystems (7.5)

Riparian areas and other sensitive ecosystems are important natural buffers that help keep our community safe. They reduce flooding, manage stormwater, and help protect us during extreme weather. They also provide clean water, support healthy plant and animal life, and create essential pathways for wildlife.

This permit area helps protect these natural features by making sure projects follow the recommendations of a qualified professional. It applies to any project within 60 metres of lakes and rivers, 35 metres from the centreline of streams, or 30 metres from the edge of wetlands.

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FORM & CHARACTER

General Form and Character Guidelines (7.7)

The General Form and Character Guidelines apply to the Downtown Mixed Use, Regional Mixed Use, and Multi-Unit Residential Development Permit Areas. These guidelines promote good building design by guiding building placement and form, site access and parking, accessibility for people with mobility or sensory challenges, and the use of green infrastructure and outdoor amenities like public art.

Permit Area: Downtown Mixed Use (7.8)

These guidelines support the revitalization of the downtown. This permit area encourages new development to follow basic urban design principles that enhance the pedestrian experience and strengthen the relationship between buildings and the street. The guidelines address elements such as active commercial uses at street level, window signage, colour principles, and pedestrian amenity spaces.

Permit Area: Regional Mixed Use (7.9)

Guidelines for the Regional Mixed Use Development Permit Area aim to revitalize commercial, mixed use, and multi-unit residential development by promoting good architectural design, pedestrian connections, and the addition of landscaped medians, intersection bump-outs, and public art. This permit area applies to properties along the Columbia Avenue Corridor.

Permit Area: Multi-Unit Residential (7.10)

This permit area is intended to ensure new multi-unit buildings fit well into the surrounding neighbourhood or commercial area. The guidelines consider roof style, parking, the overall shape and size of the building, and how a project connects to streets and sidewalks. These requirements apply to all residential buildings with five or more units, as well as mixed-use buildings.

Permit Area: Industrial (7.11)

All properties in the M1: Light Industrial zone are in this permit area. It promotes good architectural design practices, implements appropriate screening, and encourages low impact development techniques and improvements to neighbourhood connectivity.