Commercial Site Development Permits

Site Development (SDEV) Permits are required for all site work outside the footprint of existing buildings. Examples of site work that would require an SDEV permit include, but is not limited to: grading or clearing, construction of storm facilities, paving and other site work the requires review for design and code requirements. This sheet provides information on when an SDEV permit is needed and explains the different classification levels of an SDEV permit.

What is the purpose of an SDEV Permit?

To ensure city design standards as well as code and regulatory requirements are applied to site work, in order to protect public safety and the environment.

Cumulative Impact Mitigation Requirements

When project sites are re-developed, constructed in phases, or otherwise change through gradual development Cumulative Impact Mitigation ensures stormwater requirements are applied for environmental protection. The total of all addition to or replacement of hard surfaces and converted vegetation areas, since January 1, 2003, is added together to calculate thresholds and determine permit requirements.

Site Activities Requiring an SDEV Permit

The table below outlines site activities and types of projects that would require an SDEV permit. Exemptions for general property maintenance such as landscaping or gardening are detailed in the Tacoma Municipal Code in section 2.19.030.F.

Site Disturbing activity	• Site grading (cut or fill) of >50 cubic yards • New or replaced hard surfaces of ≥2,000 square feet • Disturbing ≥7,000 square feet of land • Parking lot overlays • New impervious surfaces
Building-related work	• Site work related to a new building, remodel or addition that includes a new foundation or work outside an existing building footprint • Demolition of building foundations • Installation of a stormwater or sanitary sewer treatment device *Note: An SDEV is often needed in relation to a BLDCN or BLDCA even when site work falls below the area thresholds listed above*
Land Use-related activity	• Parking lot landscaping • Work permitted in Critical Areas • Parking lot (re)striping • Change of Use

Other Permits May Be Needed

Other permits are often needed in combination with an SDEV permit for related utlity, right-of-way, or building work. Permit Tip Sheets are available online at: https://www.tacomapermits.org/tip-sheet-index. Below is a list of additional permits types that are often asssociated with onsite work:

- Work Order (WO)
- Storm Connection (STORM)
- Right-of-Way Construction (RCON)
- Side Sewer (SEWER)
- Commercial Building Alteration (BLDCA)

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SITE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT CLASSIFICATIONS

The table below outlines the different SDEV permit types. Some projects, such as those that use a single, combined plan set for both onsite and offsite work, are categorized as Major Level 2 permits to capture the review of both the SDEV and Work Order (WO-related) plan improvements regardless of the project size.

	MINOR	MAJOR

LEVEL 1	Minor Level 1 permit
	• Small, non-exempted, work that disturbs a site including:
	  ○ <50 cubic yards grading
	  ○ <2,000 square feet new/replaced hard surface
	  ○ <7,000 square feet disturbed area
	• Examples may include:
	  ○ Stormwater treatment device
	  ○ Grease interceptor
	  ○ Trash compactor pad
	
	Minor Level 1 SDEV permits are charged a flat rate.
		Major Level 1 permit
		• Larger projects that disturbs a site including:
		  ○ 5,000 to <50,000 square feet new/replaced hard surface, OR
		  ○ 500 to <10,000 cubic yards grading, OR
		  ○ 1 acre to <10 acres disturbed area
		• Examples may include:
		  ○ Commercial buildings,
		  ○ Park projects
		  ○ Plats
		  ○ Schools
		
		Major Level 1 permits are charged a flat rate.

LEVEL 2	Minor Level 2 permit
	• Smaller projects with site disturbance:
	  ○ 2,000 to <5,000 square feet new/replaced hard surface, OR
	  ○ 50 to <500 cubic yards grading, OR
	  ○ 7,000 square feet to <1 acre disturbed area
	• Examples may include:
	  ○ Single family homes
	  ○ Tenant improvements with exterior upgrade requirements
	  ○ Limited commercial projects
	
	Minor Level 2 permits are charged a flat rate.
		Major Level 2 permit
		• ≥50,000 square feet new/replaced hard surface, OR
		• ≥10,000 cubic yards grading, OR
		• ≥10 acres disturbed area
		• Cumulative impact projects
		• Examples may include:
		  ○ Commercial buildings,
		  ○ Park or school projects
		  ○ Plats
		  ○ Transit projects
		
		Major Level 2 permits are charged an hourly rate, on a monthly basis, for City Staff review time

(Additional information about fees is available on the Fee Estimator page)

Submittal Requirements

The SDEV Document Checklist provides information regarding submittal requirements. Depending on the scope of the project, engineered drawings or reports may be required. The Pre-Application process helps identify the need for engineered plans.

Note: This Tip Sheet does not substitute for codes and regulations.
The applicant is responsible for compliance with all codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document.