

Welcome to Belle Plaine Permitting

We are here to help you complete your project! Whether you are pulling your first-ever building permit or you are familiar with our procedures, we'll help you through the review and permitting process. Our review process consists of applications and reviews. Applications and review help ensure proposed projects comply with codes and regulations and result in quality, safe, and healthy development. The level of review needed differs by the type of project proposed. Some projects simply require a building permit whereas other projects may require a more extensive review, including public hearings. Generally, the review process can be broken down into three phases: [initial contact](#), [zoning review](#), and [building review](#).

Your best first step is to contact the Community Development Department and talk about proposed changes. During the initial conversation, we will listen to your plans and outline how to move forward with your project. Occasionally plans will need to be adjusted to meet code. In those instances, we'll discuss your options and provide potential alternatives. We find preliminary discussion provides the most favorable results.

Here's More Information

For those who want more information about the review process, here are some tools to help:

- A [decision tree](#) including questions to ask/answer at the start of a project to determine possible review(s) needed.
- [Zoning review process outline](#). If your project needs approval by the City Council, this chart outlines typically review procedures.
- [Building permit review process outline](#). If your project requires a permit, this chart outlines typical review procedures.
- A [subdivision review process outline](#). If your project involves changing property lines, this chart outlines typical subdivision review procedures.
- [Application forms and checklists](#) for use when applying for and submitting complete applications for review.
- The [current fee schedule](#) listing required fees for development review processes.

How long review takes depends on several things, including: (1) how complete your application is, (2) extent of review/approval needed; and (3) meeting cycles. If just a building permit is needed and complete plans are received, permit issuance is typically within two weeks. If a comprehensive plan amendment or subdivision plat approval is needed, review timeline can easily be up to six months.

Applicant Best Practices:

1. When in doubt, please contact us, we want to hear from you.
2. Try to clearly define your project, especially when it changes.
3. Try to get all information needed for your review to staff at one time. If you have questions about level of plan detail or format, let us know so we can help.
4. Make sure your plans are based on an accurate scale (for example one inch = one foot). Note the scale used on your plans.
5. Use a certificate of survey as a base for your plans. If you don't have one, it is likely money well spent as you will want to know exactly where your property boundary is and where things are located on your lot. Occasionally and in special instances we can allow you to just find your property boundary. We have a metal detector you can use to try to find property stakes/pins.
6. Ask any questions you have whenever you have them, we are here to assist. If we have questions or

need more information, please respond at your earliest convenience.

7. If your development needs formal review by the City Council (i.e. not just administrative staff review) please plan on attending Planning Commission and City Council meetings where your project is being discussed. With exceptions for holidays, Planning Commission meetings are held the second Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. City Council meetings are held on the first and third Mondays at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, subject to holidays. The [current meeting calendar](#) is available online.
8. Presenting information to the City Council can be intimidating, but we are here to help you through the process. Do your homework and be prepared, learn about the [public hearing process](#) and be ready to testify.

City Responsibilities:

1. Fair and open development review.
2. Healthy people, neighborhoods, businesses, and buildings, although it may not seem like it, all plans, codes, and policies are based on promoting health, safety, and welfare of current and future citizens. Our goal is not endless red tape although sometimes it may seem so.
3. Coordination of development review, tracking of project, creation a review record, and close-out as needed.
4. Provide professional insight, oversight, and advice.

Step One: Get Informed, Talk With Us

Having a clear idea of what you are proposing and how it fits on your property and with community plans will help you save time and money in the review process. Doing some homework is often helpful. Here's some information to get you started.

Building/Zoning Jargon

- **Building Permit Review:** Building review is different from zoning review. Building review looks at what you are proposing and how that compares to building, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire, ADA, and other code requirements. Most construction projects, except just painting or flooring, require a building permit and, therefore, building permit review. Change in occupancy of structures (i.e. how you use your property or structure) also requires review. Building permit review is an administrative process. Following plan review a permit will be issued. The permit will identify the type and timing of required inspections by the Building Official.
- **Comprehensive Plan:** Metro cities are required to have a comprehensive plan guiding the overall growth and development in effect. [Destination 2040](#) is Belle Plaine's comprehensive plan. All development and redevelopment must be consistent with Destination 2040, especially the [planned land use map](#).
- **Conditional or Interim Use Permits:** How you may use your property is determined by what zoning district applies to the property. For example, houses are allowed in residential zoning districts but not in industrial zones. Uses allowed within each zoning district are classified as 'permitted', 'accessory', 'conditional', or 'interim' uses. If a use is not specifically allowed it is considered prohibited. Permitted and accessory uses are allowed as a right provided all other code standards are met. Conditional or interim uses may impact adjacent neighborhoods or future plans. As such conditional and interim uses require City Council approval. Permits to establish conditional uses run 'with the land' and not the land

owner; permits for interim uses may include an expiration date.

- **Planned Unit Development (PUD):** Planned unit development is an alternate form of development review that provides for unique or innovative developments. PUD are an 'overlay' district superimposed on a base zone (e.g. residential, commercial, industrial). PUD may include mixed uses within a site, within a building, or within a subdivision of property. Departure from strict performance standards are accommodated under a development plan. PUD often require concurrent platting of property. PUD are often referred to as development by contract.
- **Property Subdivision (Platting):** City Code requires most uses and/or structures be placed on platted lots of record. Applicants wanting to divide or combine properties typically need to go through subdivision review. Administrative (minor) subdivisions are allowed in limited situations. The conventional plat process requires official review and is divided into three phases: concept plan, preliminary plat, and final plat.
- **Rezoning:** Every property within the City has been assigned a zoning district classification. Zoning classifications for all properties are identified on the [Official Zoning Map](#). Requirements for individual districts include a list of what uses of property are allowed and [performance standards that apply](#) (e.g. minimum lot size, minimum lot width, setbacks, lot coverage, building height). Changes how a property is zoned may be approved by the City Council; however, the rezoning must be consistent with [Destination 2040](#), specifically the [planned future land use map](#).
- **Variances:** A variance is an approved exception to a zoning standard. The City can't approve a variance for a use of property or a building permit requirement. Variances require City Council approval and may be denied.
- **Zoning/Site Plan Review:** This is a process to review how your proposed construction project relates to zoning requirements. Zoning review is separate from building permit review. Zoning/site plan review may be administrative for smaller projects such as fences, signage, accessory structures, small additions, etc. Larger new construction or expansion projects may require City Council approval.

Project Review Process Explained

[This project review tree](#) consists of questions to ask/answer at the start of a project to determine possible review(s) needed.

Access to Plans, Codes, and Policies

1. The [Destination 2040](#) describes how the City will look in the future. All development and redevelopment must be consistent with Destination 2040, especially the [planned land use map](#). The 2040 vision is a healthy, livable, vibrant, and sustainable community for all ages and abilities. If your project is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan an amendment to the plan may be needed.
2. The City Code is our collection of local laws; development proposals are expected to meet City Code. The Code addresses specific items relating to [land use \(zoning\)](#) and [subdivision \(platting\)](#). The [Code is available online](#) for review/consultation.
3. The [Building Code \(and related standards\)](#) are sets of rules that specify standards for the construction and occupancy of buildings and non-building structures.
4. [Information and applications](#) for common building permit projects are available online.

Questions to Consider Before You Begin

Prior to contacting the City about a planned change to your property, it may be beneficial to consider the following questions:

1. Where is the property located?
2. What is the property zoned? The zoning assigned to your property determines how you can and cannot use your property. Your zoning district is the basis for review of your project.
3. Is the proposed use (what you are doing with your land) allowed in the applicable zoning district? Each zoning district has a list of standards. Once you find your zoning district you can look up the standards in the City Code.
4. What is your timeline?
5. Are you the sole owner of the property or do other persons need to sign off on your plans?
6. Have you created an initial sketch of what you're planning and how it relates to the general area? Is it to scale?
7. What other options have you considered?
8. As a matter of courtesy, have you talked to your neighbors about exterior/outdoor changes you're planning?

Our Preliminary Project Conversation

After doing some research, please contact the Community Development Department to talk about your potential project. We'll talk about what reviews are needed and anticipated timeframe. Please know each proposed project is different so review timelines, costs, information needed, and applications needed will be different.

Pre-Submittal Review

More significant developments may require you to attend a pre-submittal meeting(s) with senior City staff. This helps us all become familiar with your development plan and identify significant review issues.

Step Two: Zoning Review

Most projects require either administrative approval or formal City Council zoning review and approval. If administrative approval is needed this will be done by staff at the time a building permit is issued. If formal review by the City Council is needed, that begins with filing an application, plan information, and a fee for review. We'll provide the form and a checklist for your submittal. The application(s) required differ by project. Written and electronic applications may be accepted. When we receive your application, we'll review it to make sure all the materials needed are included. If not, staff will let you know what additional items are needed.

Here's More Information

Applications and checklists for the following requests are found here: <http://www.belleplainmn.com/permits-licenses-forms>

[Site plan application](#)

[Conditional use permit application](#)

[Site plan review checklist](#)

[Conditional use permit review checklist](#)

[Interim use permit application](#)
[Rezoning application](#)
[Variance application](#)
[Comprehensive Plan amendment application](#)
[Planned unit development concept plan application](#)
[Planned unit development general plan application](#)
[Planned unit development final plan application](#)
[Administrative \(Minor\) subdivision application](#)
[Subdivision concept plan application](#)
[Subdivision preliminary plat application](#)
[Subdivision final plat application](#)

[Interim use permit review checklist](#)
[Rezoning request checklist](#)
[Variance request checklist](#)
[Comp plan amendment checklist](#)
[PUD concept plan checklist](#)
[PUD general plan checklist](#)
[PUD final plan checklist](#)
[Admin. subdivision checklist](#)
[Subdivision concept plan checklist](#)
[Preliminary plat checklist](#)
[Final plat checklist](#)

The [current fee schedule is available here](#).

After we receive your complete application for Council review we will process the request. The review timeline and process will vary by what is proposed. The review process may be completed by the Community Development Department, may involve review at a staff meeting, may involve review by City contracted consultants, and/or may require review by the Planning Commission and approval by the City Council.

Staff review may identify issues that need to be addressed which may result in conditional approval. Oftentimes projects require at least one round of revisions with the potential for additional staff review/meetings. Complex issues may require an additional time and/or meetings to resolve. Applicants may and are encouraged to participate in meetings where their applications are being discussed.

If a public hearing is needed, staff will determine whether your proposal is ready for a public hearing after the initial staff review. A public hearing notice will be drafted and sent to the *Belle Plaine Herald* for publication. The hearing notice will be posted online and mailed, if required, to property owners within 350 feet of the subject property. If review by the Planning Commission and/or City Council is required, staff will provide you a copy of the formal staff review letter and, if applicable, potential conditions of approval prior to the item being addressed at a public meeting. Public meeting packets are also available for downloading from www.belleplainemn.com simply click on the meeting date on the calendar and select the appropriate meeting.

Step Three: Building Permit Issuance & Inspections

Building and/or administrative permits are needed for most construction projects, please contact us before you begin your project. Building permits are reviewed administratively, meaning the City Council does not have to authorize them. Variances to building code and related standards are not possible.

Here's More Information on Building Permit Review & Issuance

Submittal requirements will vary based on the type of project. [Building permit information](#) is available from the City's website to assist you.

All construction within the City of Belle Plaine must comply with the most recent versions of the following codes:

- 2012 International Building Code as amended by the State of Minnesota
- 2012 International Residential Code as amended by the State of Minnesota
- 2015 International Fire Code as amended by the State of Minnesota
- 2012 International Mechanical Code as amended by the State of Minnesota
- 2012 International Fuel Gas Code as amended by the State of Minnesota
- 2017 National Electric Code
- 2015 Minnesota Conservation Code for Existing Buildings
- 2015 Minnesota Energy Code with ANSI/IES Standard 90.1-2010
- 2015 Minnesota State Accessibility Code

- 2012 Uniform Plumbing Code as amended by the State of Minnesota

Applicants must typically submit two complete sets of construction plans and an electronic set when applying for a building permit. Plan review and permit fees apply and are collected upon permit issuance. Fee amounts vary by project. Some permits (re-roofing, siding, new windows, etc.) are assigned a flat fee. More significant projects such as remodeling, reconstruction, and new construction are based on the value of the project. Some permits can be issued “over-the-counter” for minor work which does not involve a formal plan review. Others require formal plan review and will typically be issued within two weeks of receipt of a completed application.

All permit applications are available to pick up in person at City Hall or [available for downloading](#) from the City’s website. Applicants are notified when permits are reviewed and issued and available for pick-up. Applicants will be given the original permit card which includes a listing of required inspections. Applicants will also receive a copy of their plan submittal with staff comments and any necessary changes clearly marked on the plans. The building permit should be posted on the premises and a copy of the reviewed plans should be retained on site.

What You Can Expect With Inspections

Building inspections are required as part of the building permit process. Inspections identify whether or not work completed is up to code and confirm necessary changes are complete. Our goal is to be on-site for inspection within one or two days of being asked. Most inspections can be scheduled by calling City Hall at 952-873-5553. Electrical inspections must be coordinated with the consulting electrical inspector.

The number and type of inspections needed depend on the type of permit you obtain. Typically, inspections should occur within 180 days of receiving your permit. This ensures the City can close out a permit that only requires a final inspection or to keep an existing permit active for those that require multiple inspections. Permits that remain open and are inactive may be reclassified as ‘expired’. Expired permit status means the work has not been approved by the City and a new permit is needed before any additional work or inspection can be done. Expired and open (unfinished) permits have been known to hold up the sale of property.

Building permit holders are responsible for providing access for inspections, including: (a) ensuring that the components are readily visible and not concealed or permanently covered and (b) ensuring that access is readily available by temporary stairs, ladder, or other necessary means to perform the inspection.

A certificate of occupancy (CO) is required prior to occupying a building. A temporary certificate of occupancy (TCO) may be issued pending minor remaining items awaiting completion or where only portions of the building are complete in specific cases.