

# Development Variance Permit Application Guide



*This handout provides information on the requirements and processes for obtaining a Development Variance Permit.*

## When is a Development Variance Permit Required?

A Development Variance Permit is required when a property owner, or an applicant (acting on behalf of the property owner), wishes to change a particular requirement of the Zoning Bylaw, Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw, or Sign Bylaw. Variance requests include:

- **Zoning Bylaw** - building setbacks, building height, and lot width. (Permitted uses and density regulated under the Zoning Bylaw cannot be varied per Local Government Act requirements.)
- **Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw** – timing of servicing requirements.
- **Sign Bylaw** - allowable area for a sign.

## What is a Minor Development Variance Permit?

A Minor Development Variance Permit can be applied for when the variance falls within 20% of the value prescribed in the relevant Bylaw, and the variance application is not associated with a non-delegated development permit. Minor Development Variance Permits are only applicable if the variance falls under:

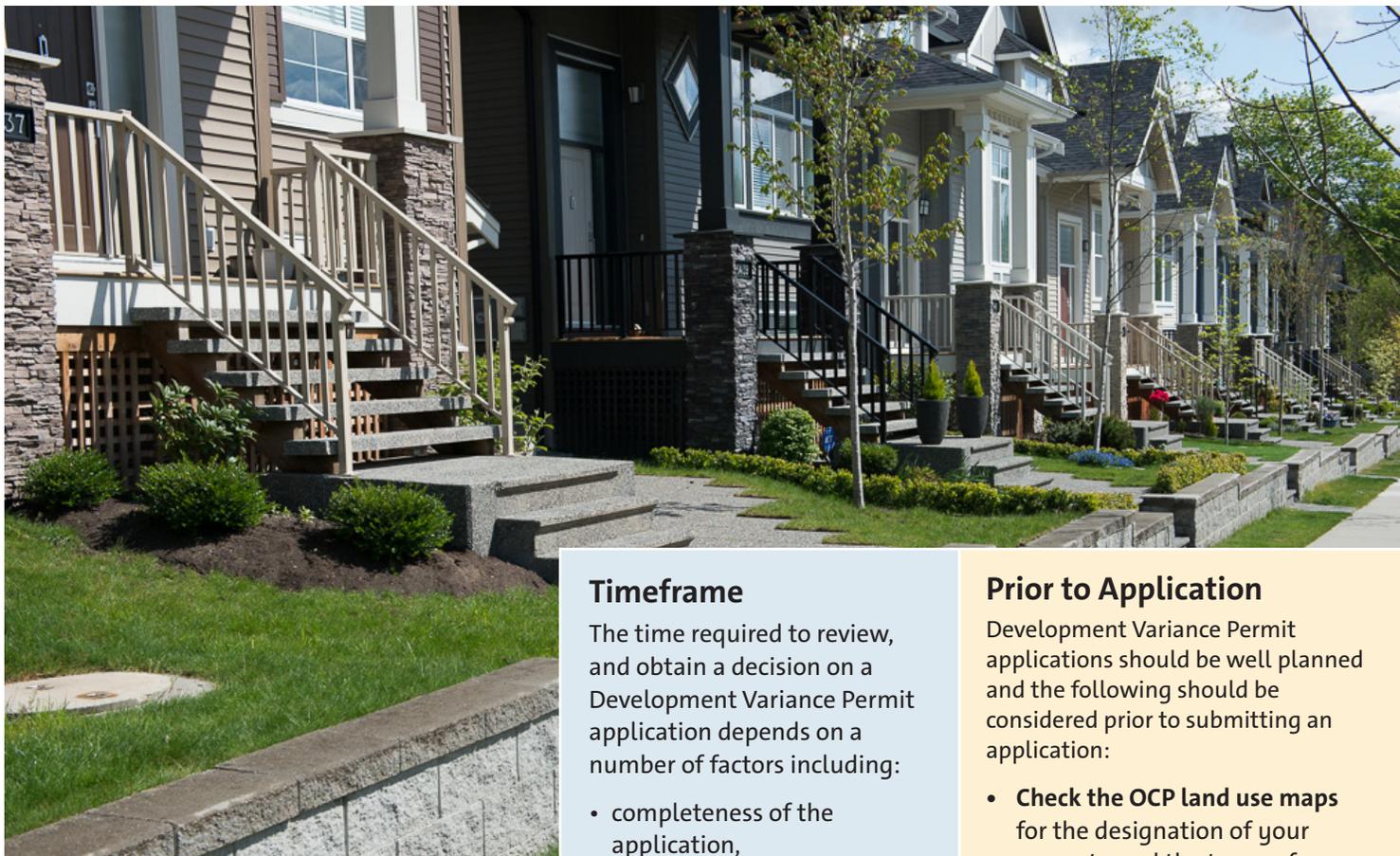
- Zoning Bylaw - siting, size and dimensions of buildings, structures and location of permitted uses; or
- Zoning Bylaw - off-street parking and loading space requirements; or
- Sign Bylaw - size, location, or number of signs and their elements.

## Planning & Development

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Coquitlam

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## Timeframe

The time required to review, and obtain a decision on a Development Variance Permit application depends on a number of factors including:

- completeness of the application,
- variances requested,
- complexity of development project,
- if a rezoning and/or subdivision application is also required,
- time required to revise plans to address the identified issues in the “requirements letter, and
- timing of Council meetings.

## Prior to Application

Development Variance Permit applications should be well planned and the following should be considered prior to submitting an application:

- **Check the OCP land use maps** for the designation of your property and the types of land uses allowed within that corresponding zone. The OCP also contains policies related to specific types of development.
- **Check the City’s Zoning Maps and Zoning Bylaw** to find the zoning designation and zoning requirements for your property. It is possible that the existing zoning may not allow your proposed project. If this is the case, a rezoning application may also be required.
- **Check the City’s Sign Bylaw Requirements.** Anyone intending to place a sign on the exterior of any building or structure or on any property in the City must make an application and obtain approval for a Sign Permit prior to installation. This requirement applies to both permanent and time-limited signs. Applications are reviewed for compliance with the City’s Sign Bylaw.

## Development Variance Permit Application Tips.

- ✓ Provide all information requested in the application form and application checklist.
- ✓ Include the rationale for and impact assessment of each requested variance.
- ✓ Provide water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer systems, and other services at the developer’s costs.
  - The servicing of roads, lanes and sidewalks adjacent to the land being developed is required for all development except single-unit dwellings and must meet the requirements of the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw.

# Development Servicing

## Concurrent Applications

For rezoning and subdivision applications processed concurrently, the same Development Variance Permit process applies. Minor Development Variance Permits may not be applied for if associated with a non-delegated development permit, and Development Variance Permits cannot be authorized until the rezoning has been given final approval.

## Development Variance Permit Application Procedure

The process for a Development Variance Permit is similar to a Development Permit except:

- City Council is the entity that considers the Development Variance Permits and the General Manager Planning and Development, as Delegated by Council under the Local Government Act, considers Minor Development Variance Permits.
- Public notification to surrounding property owners and tenants is required at least ten (10) days prior to City Council's consideration.

## Development Variance Permit Review Process

**Step 1** **File Manager assigned** from Development Planning.

**Step 2** **Acknowledgment letter:** The File Manager will send an acknowledgment letter to the applicant to confirm receipt and provide contact information.

**Step 3** **Referral:** The File Manager refers the application to appropriate City Departments and any external agencies.

**Step 4** **Review:** The application will be reviewed for compliance with the Official Community Plan, Zoning Bylaw, Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw, any pertinent guidelines, City policies and regulations as required.

**Step 5** **Applicant Letter:** The File Manager will forward referral comments to the applicant in a requirements letter outlining the changes and/or revisions necessary prior to authorizing the Development Variance Permit.

**Step 6** **Resubmission:** Upon receipt of revisions, the application will be referred back to the referral groups for confirmation that the requirements letter revisions have been addressed.

The letter will also provide an estimate of the Development Cost Charges and School Site Acquisition Charges that would be required with Building Permit issuance, and provide target dates for the remaining steps in the Development Variance Permit review process.

**Step 7** **Public Notification:** Once the Development Variance Permit application review is complete and ready for Council's consideration, the File Manager will launch the required public notification process.

The City Clerk's office will send out letters notifying residents and business operators within 50 metres of the site of the Development Variance Permit application at least ten (10) days prior to the Council meeting date when it will be considered so the public have an opportunity to respond to the application (either in writing or in-person).

**Step 8** **Permit Preparation:** Once the plans meet requirements, the File Manager prepares the Development Variance Permit document and forwards a Development Variance Permit Package containing copies of the Development Variance Permit to be signed by the property owner, and a sample Letter of Credit (for security).

**Step 9** **Council Decision:** The File Manager prepares a report with staff's recommendations. If the Development Variance Permit is approved the File Manager will forward the fully executed Development Variance Permit, signed by the City to the applicant.

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## Next Steps

### Building Permit

Following the approval of a Development Variance Permit, a Building Permit application must be in accordance with the Development Variance Permit plans. Any request for a change to the approved design of the building or landscaping must be brought to the attention of the Development Planning File Manager by the applicant and may require submission of an application to amend the Development Variance Permit.

## Other Considerations

### Security

A security, based on a percentage of the estimated construction value, may be required prior to Development Variance Permit authorization to ensure the development is completed in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Permit. When site development is completed, the applicant must call the File Manager to request an inspection prior to obtaining a refund on the security.

### Development Cost Charges

Anyone who obtains approval for a Subdivision or Building Permit must pay Development Cost Charges (DCCs) to the City which are paid either at the time of approval of the subdivision or at time of Building Permit issuance. As part of the Development Variance Permit review, the File Manager will provide the applicant with an estimate of the City's DCCs, in addition to the Greater Vancouver Sewage and Drainage District DCCs and School Site Acquisition Charges that will be required prior to Building Permit issuance.

### Legal Costs

Restrictive covenants, statutory rights-of-way or other legal agreements and documents may be required. It is the applicant's responsibility to have these documents prepared for the City's review.

## Talk with your Neighbours

Consultation with your neighbours who may be affected by the proposed development variance permit application is strongly encouraged. Obtaining neighbours input better enables an applicant to address any concerns and/or modify their application before significant time and investment are made in the review process.



## Contact Us

- **Development Applications**  
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