




Washington County

M A R Y L A N D

DIVISION OF
ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT
PLAN REVIEW | PERMITTING | ENGINEERING | CONSTRUCTION

MEMORANDUM

TO: Permit Customers, Contractors, and Vendors

FROM:  Robert Slocum, Director, Engineering and Construction Management, Code Official

C: Tim Lung, Angela Smith, Rich Eichelberger, Aaron Stoner

SUBJECT: **Grading Permit, Site Plan, Building Permit, Footer Foundation Permit**

DATE: July 11, 2016

This memorandum will serve to summarize Grading, Site Plan, Footer and Foundation, and Building Permit processes in relation to one another. Each process has been streamlined within and across departments to provide customers with individual service most expediently.

Grading Permit

While there is no distinction between mass grading and detail grading, there is a significant difference between grading and structural fill, footers, foundations, and stormwater material placement. Grading requires a grading plan and permit only. Building foundations and infrastructure to be dedicated for public use require more planning and approval. The latter are addressed by site plan and building permit.

Grading permits may be issued with a grading plan alone. A standalone grading permit may be applied for entirely independent of a preliminary plat, site development plan, or building permit. As such, grading may be executed in advance of other plans and permits.

This option offers flexibility and expediency in grading, yet may require subsequent regrading to address site plan and building permit details. A grading permit does not imply any vested right in building, subdivision, or site development.

Grading plans are reviewed by the Plan Review Department and inspected by the Construction Department. The sediment and erosion control devices to address grading disturbances are reviewed by the Soil Conservation District and inspected by the State. State regulations and other considerations require the grading sequence of activities, phasing, and timeframes to be spelled out explicitly in a grading plan. A grading plan must specify each stage of activity from pre-existing to the final grade, as proposed by that particular plan. The detail required in a grading plan is determined by the disturbance.

The disturbance thresholds are under 5,000sf and 100cy for no plan; 5,000sf and 100cy for a standard plan, 30,000sf or above for a site specific plan, and one acre or above for a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Disturbance thresholds vary slightly for agricultural intent permits. The Maryland Department of Environment, under United States Environmental Protection Agency authorization, administers NPDES permits.

Grading plans are sometimes included in greater plan sets, such as building plans, preliminary plats, or site plans. As such, the grading plan may or may not be permitted prior to the other permits. Variables include provisions required of the greater plan set, i.e. financial security, third party inspections, external agency approval, limits of disturbance, utilities, and interim stabilization. A standalone grading permit under a greater plan will require a letter from the applicant and staff assessment of such variables.

When early grading is anticipated, customers are encouraged to provide standalone grading plans independent of site and building plans.

Site Plan

To install infrastructure for public access, use, or maintenance requires easement, right of way, bonding, and approval of external agencies. A site plan will gain such approval.

Site plans and building plans may be reviewed concurrently; site plan approval is not required prior to building plan review. However, a building permit will not be issued until the site plan is approved. The applicant is fully responsible to coordinate site and building plans for consistency. Issuance of a site plan approval does not imply any vested right in a subsequent building permit.

Should the creation of lots, easement, or right of way be required, a preliminary and final plat will be required prior to site plan execution. Section 501.1 of the Subdivision Ordinance states that, "No improvements shall begin until approval of a final plat". A Final Plat is defined (sec 202.47.c.) as "the final map or plan which legally describes the subdivision of land...".

The subdivision ordinance allows for construction of roads and utilities associated with the entire development, or a portion thereof, as proposed on a preliminary plat; provided that a final plat be approved which depicts all of the required road and utility easements and includes a subdivision of a lot or lots.

Building Permit

The building permit application must include all applicable sections of a complete architectural plan set, i.e. Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, and Structural. The current code with local amendments is available at: http://www.washco-md.net/permits/p_codes.shtm.

Footer and Foundation Permit

A footer and foundation (formerly early start) permit may be applied for with an approved site plan and building permit application in place. An access permit and other site specific provisions may be required prior to approval. A footer and foundation permit does not imply any vested right in building, subdivision, or site development.

Schedule

Staff endeavors to assist with the investment in planned improvements in Washington County. While all applications are handled with the greatest practical efficiency, the applicant may anticipate a minimum of five working days to process permits related to each of the above applications.