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BEFORE PURSUING THE BUILDING PERMIT

Before beginning any work, answering the questions below will help with the permitting process.

Is a contractor doing the work?

There are many ways to ensure that you are working with a good contractor. The City of Houston does not license building contractors, but there are several voluntary trade organizations where you can find lists of them. You can also check the Better Business Bureau (www.bbb.org) for business reviews, alerts and tips. Be sure to always check references and ensure that your contractor is properly insured.

Have you verified any deed restrictions that may be attached to your property?

Deed restrictions are written agreements that restrict or limit the use or activities that may take place on a property in a subdivision. You may purchase a copy from the County Clerk's Office, but your civic club may also have copies of your subdivision's deed restrictions. Be sure to check for any deed restrictions that exist before beginning any construction projects.

Are you aware of any Homeowners Association (HOA) restrictions?

HOAs sometimes place restrictions on the types of construction that can occur, so be sure to check with your HOA before beginning any construction projects.

Have you verified your property's setback requirements?

A setback is a specific distance that your house or any structure built on your property must be from the City's Right of Way, easements or homes/structures that are adjacent to your property. Setback requirements change over time so make sure you know the setback requirements before you start planning your project.

Is your property in the 100-year floodplain or floodway?

Prior to starting your project, visit www.gims.houstontx.gov to determine if your property is located in the 100-year floodplain or floodway. If you have flood insurance you can also contact your insurance provider for this information as well.



HELPFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

Flood maps:

www.gims.houstontx.gov

Harris County Appraisal District:

www.hcad.orgMontgomery Central Appraisal District: www.mcad-tx.org

Fort Bend Central Appraisal District:

www.fbcad.org

Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCFCD)

9900 Northwest Freeway

Houston, TX 77092

713-684-4000

Harris County Flood Control District Watershed Coordinator

713-956-3074

Harris County Flood Control District Property Management

713-684-4000

Center Point Energy Land & Right-of-Way Department (TRT-11)

PO Box 1700

Houston, TX 77251-1700

Attention: Julie Bray 713-207-1557

Linsey Williams 713-207-6211

Southwestern Bell Telephone Company (SBC) Right-of-Way

7602 Spring Cypress, Room #226

Spring, TX 77379

Jerry Ray 281-379-7524 or Amanda

Burus 281-379-7518

Do you plan to cut the curb?

Only bonded contractors are allowed to perform work where the curb is going to be cut. The bond must be a \$2,000 sidewalk/driveway surety bond. A copy of the bond must be presented by either the homeowner or contractor when purchasing the building permit.

Are there any obstacles (trees, hydrants, light poles, etc.) that must be removed or relocated?

You will be required to obtain written permission to remove any obstacles that are managed by other agencies. You must contact those agencies directly to obtain permission. Prior to removal or relocation of a hydrant, you must submit engineered drawings to the Office of City Engineer for review and approval. You are also required to obtain written permission from the City of Houston to remove or do any work that affects the roots of any trees that are in the City's Right of Way or setback. To obtain forestry approval, please email Dale Temple at dale.temple@houstontx.gov to setup an appointment.

Will your project encroach on an easement?

You will be required to obtain an exemption from the Office of the City Engineer if your project encroaches on any portion of the street or roadway easement. You will be required to apply for Consent to Easement Encroachment through the Utility Analysis - Developer Services Section if your project encroaches on a City of Houston utility easement. If you have questions regarding this, please contact Sarun Chhin at 832-394-8986.

NOTE: *If the easement is dedicated to the Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCFCD), you must have your plans approved by HCFCFCD prior to obtaining a permit from the City. If your easement is dedicated to a utility company, you will need to obtain a release from the utility company. Contacts for utility company easement questions can be found in the left hand column on this page.*

What is the total cost of your project?

The estimated project cost will be needed in order to complete the building permit application. (See page 6 for more information.)

DEFINITIONS**BASE FLOOD ELEVATION (BFE)**

The expected height of flooding during the base flood or “100-year event” (a rainstorm that has a 1% chance of occurring in a given year).

CULVERT

A drain or pipe that allows water to flow under a surface such as a driveway.

CONVEYANCE ZONE

The portion of the Special Flood Hazard Area that is utilized to convey water during the occurrence of the base flood. Areas in a floodplain where natural ground is 18 inches below base flood elevation or are within 100 feet of the floodway are defined as conveyance zones.

DEED RESTRICTIONS

Written agreements that restrict or limit the use or activities that may take place on a property in a subdivision. Deed restrictions come with the property and cannot be changed or removed by subsequent owners.

EASEMENT

Areas set aside for installation and maintenance of utilities by public and private utility operators. You cannot typically build on these areas because they would limit access to the utilities.

FLOODPLAIN

Land area around a stream, river or bayou that would be affected by flooding during a “100-year event” (a rainstorm that has a 1% chance of occurring in a given year), because the water is no longer contained within the banks of the stream, river or bayou during or after that event. In the City of Houston, this area has been mapped throughout the City and can be found on the GIMS (Geographic Information & Management System) website www.gims.houstontx.gov. The floodplain is also known as “A” zones on flood insurance maps produced by FEMA. “A” zones include Zone A, Zone AE and Zone AO.

FLOODWAY

The area for storm runoff along a bayou, river, or other watercourse. In the City of Houston, this area has been mapped throughout the City and can be found on the GIMS website. www.gims.houstontx.gov

HOMEOWNER’S ASSOCIATION

An organization created by a group of property owners, or property developers which helps to oversee any shared property belonging to the homeowner group, and which usually has a legal means of enforcing agreed upon rules the homeowners must follow.

PROJECT COST

This includes the total cost of construction to the end user, excluding the land purchase costs and the overhead attributed to the land purchase. It also includes the value of donated goods and services.

PROPERTY LINE

A line dividing one lot from another, or from a street or any public place.

SETBACK

A specific distance your house or any structure built on your property must be from the City’s Right of Way, easements or homes/structures adjacent to your property. Setback requirements may change over time.

KEY CONTACTS

Houston Permitting Center

Hours of Operation:
8:00 am – 5:00 pm

1002 Washington Ave.
Houston, TX 77002

Phone: 832-394-9000

Email: houston.permittingcenter@houstontx.gov

Building Code Enforcement Permits

Hours of Operation:
8:00am – 5:00pm

Contact Information:
Phone: 832-394-9494

Email: rmcagd@houstontx.gov

Traffic Plan Review

Hours of Operation:
8:00 am – 4:00 pm

Contact Information:
Phone: 832-394-8851 or 832-394-9387

Email: Kumar.Arya@houstontx.gov or Lakeisha.Henderson@houstontx.gov

Floodplain Management Office

Hours of Operation:
8:00am – 4:30pm

Contact Information:
Phone: 832-394-8854

Email: fmo@houstontx.gov

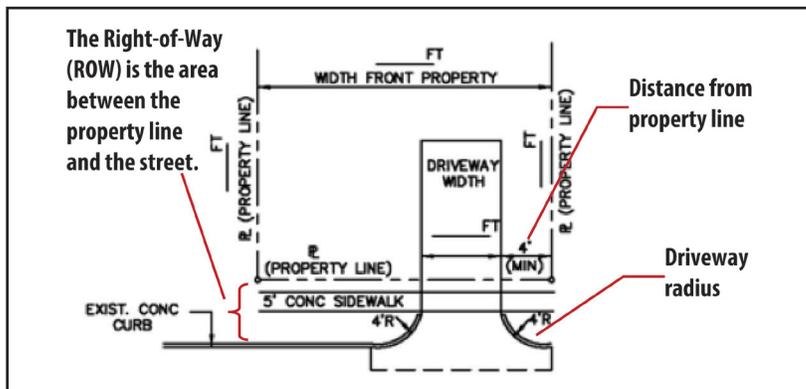
Inspections

General Number..... 713-222-9922
Traffic (OCE)..... 832-394-9496
Flood..... 832-394-8854

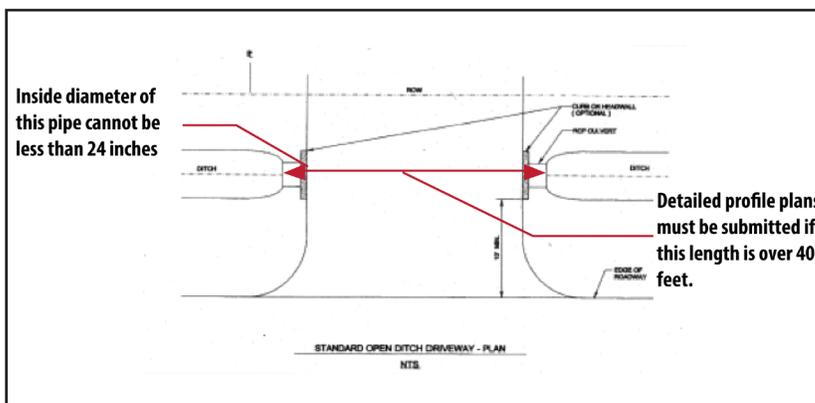
WHAT SPECIAL CONDITIONS EXIST?

The following items represent the special conditions that must be considered as you prepare your plans. Some of these items may not be applicable to your specific project:

- The radius of the driveway approach (see example below) should not pass the property line.
- Your driveway must be at least 4 feet from the nearest property line (see example below).



- The inside diameter of the culvert pipe cannot be less than 24 inches (see example below).
- You cannot install a culvert pipe that has a smaller inside diameter than the nearest upstream culvert pipe.
- If your culvert pipe is larger than the standard 40 foot wide driveway culvert, it requires a submittal of a plan and profile type drawing prepared by a licensed engineer.



Storm Water Plan Review

The Storm Water Plan Review ensures compliance with the City's storm water and drainage policies.

For Single family residential lots of 15,000 square feet in area or less

- Storm Water Plan Review is **ONLY REQUIRED** if impervious cover is greater than 75% of the total property.

For Single family residential lots over 15,000 square feet

- Storm Water plan review **IS REQUIRED**. (For more information on the Storm Review Process, please visit page 6)

In either case

- If the impervious cover is greater than 75%, a Storm Water Availability Letter must be submitted with your plans. In this case, it is recommended that you submit your plans to "One Stop Plan Review" instead of using the One Stop walk-through permitting process. The turnaround time for this review process is approximately 7 days.
- If the impervious cover is greater than 75%, storm water detention must be provided on the property.
- If the impervious cover is greater than 75% and the additional square footage being added is less than 1,000 square feet, your project may qualify for low-impact development techniques as described in Chapter 13 of the 'Infrastructure Design Manual' (IDM). In this case the storm water detention may be satisfied via Rain Barrels (non-engineered) or Bio Swales (engineered). Examples of these low-impact methods are available in Chapter 13 of the IDM. If you believe your project meets the low-impact development criteria contact Storm Plan Review at 832-394-8810 to discuss your project.
- To determine the impervious cover percentage you must complete the 'Calculation of Impervious Percentage Form'. In order to complete the 'Calculation of Impervious Percentage Form', you will need to obtain your site dimensions.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR BUILDING PERMIT APPROVAL **Sidewalk-Driveway Curb & Gutter Culvert Parking Lot Permit Application (Form CE-1023)**

This form must be filled out for all driveway work. It can be completed prior to arriving at the HPC.

 Sidewalk, Driveway, Curb & Gutter Builders Bond

Only bonded contractors are allowed to perform work where the curb is going to be cut. The bond must be a \$2,000 sidewalk/driveway surety bond.

 Two Complete Sets of Plans Drawn to Scale

- Site Plan drawn to a recognized (Architect or Engineer's) scale and showing the following:
 - Proposed driveway/s
 - Location of driveway to nearest neighbor's common property line
 - Widths of: driveway, sidewalks, ditches and culverts
 - Existing trees, storm inlets and location of edge of pavement
 - Center line of ditch & radii or taper of the driveway (see page 10 for links to examples)

 Project Cost (see Definitions on page 3):

For a building permit, the required cost estimate is a market valuation that includes the profit and overhead.

NOTE: If the project cost appears to be unreasonably low, a signed contract between the owner and contractor may be required

 Floodplain Plan Review Requirements

You must provide the following if your property resides in the 100-year floodplain, floodway or conveyance zone:

- A mitigation plan must be provided that demonstrates the project represents zero net fill below base flood elevation.
- The mitigation plan may need to be prepared by a professional engineer registered in the State of Texas and be based upon a topographic survey tied to a Harris County Reference Mark and using the NAVD 1988, 2001 adjustment datum. Check with Floodplain Management Office (FMO) for project specific requirements.
- For sites that are in the conveyance zone, a conveyance analysis certified by a professional engineer is required that demonstrates that the proposed improvement will not reduce the conveyance capacity of the property by more than 0.5% (refer to this Conveyance zone FAQ for more information)
- For sites that are in the floodway, a "no adverse impact" letter and supporting documentation prepared by a professional engineer may be required depending on the scope of work.

 Storm Plan Review Requirements

(Only if Storm Plan Review is required, please see page 5 for requirements.)

- A Storm Water Availability Letter (LOSA).
- This letter is issued by the Storm Section. You must present a completed Storm Water Capacity Reservation application or the WCR Form for review in order to obtain the Storm Water Availability letter.

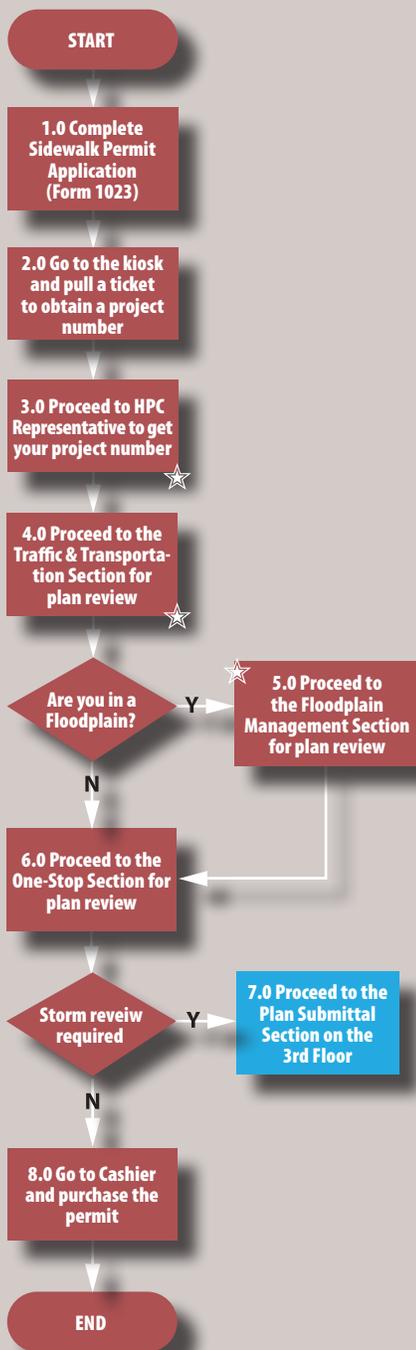
DETENTION VOLUME CALCULATION

Increased Impervious Cover (sq. ft.)	X	Detention Rate (.2 if < acre) (.5 if > acre)	=	Volume (cu. ft.)
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For Rain Barrels, use the following calculation to convert the volume from cubic feet to gallons:

Volume (cu. ft.)	X	7.48	=	Volume in Gallons
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- Site plan with analysis of impervious cover calculations (including all existing and proposed)
- Show grading detail on the site plans
- Drainage plan with adequate spot elevations (or arrows indicating the direction of drainage)
- Show detention calculation, design and analysis, signed by a Professional Engineer
- NOTE: Plans and documentation must satisfy the requirements stated in the LOSA before final approval will be granted.



STEPS TO FOLLOW AT THE HPC FOR THE BUILDING PERMIT

- 1.0 Prior to coming to the HPC, download and complete the Sidewalk, Driveway, and Culvert Permit Application (Form 1023).
- 2.0 Once at the HPC you must obtain a ticket for a project number from the kiosk station located on the first floor and wait for your number to be called.
- 3.0 HPC Customer Service Representatives (CSR) will call you on a first-come, first-serve basis. Your first step will be to obtain a project number.
- 4.0 All driveway projects must be reviewed by Traffic Plan Review since it involves work in the City’s Right of Way.
- 5.0 The Floodplain Management Office is responsible for permitting all construction activity within the City of Houston’s Special Flood Hazard Area (100-year floodplain, floodway or conveyance zone). You only need to visit the Floodplain Management Office if your project is located in the 100-year floodplain, floodway or conveyance zone. If this is not the case, please proceed to Step 6.
- 6.0 The One-Stop Plan Review section ensures plans submitted are in compliance with the current construction codes. A sales order will be provided to take to the cashier to purchase the permit.
- 7.0 Lots 15,000 sq. ft. or more OR lots less than 15,000 sq. ft. with more than 75% impervious area must go through Storm Plan Review. In these cases you must submit the plan on the 3rd floor (no kiosk ticket required). The review process (by all departments) will take 7 days. You will be called when your plans are ready to be picked up.
- 8.0 All monetary transactions are handled by the cashier on the 1st floor. The cashier will be able to provide your permit once all fees have been paid.

SECTION	KIOSK PATH
Building Permits	Permits -> Building Construction -> Project Number / Single Trade
Traffic	Plan Review -> Traffic/Right of Way Plan Review -> Yes
Floodplain Management Office	Plan Review -> Flood Management Plan Review -> Flood Management
One-Stop Plan Review	Plan Review -> Building Plan Review -> One Stop Plan Review

CUSTOMER TIP:
 A kiosk ticket is required to access the various services at the HPC. Have the CSR ‘transfer’ your current ticket to the next service in the Plan Review process instead of pulling a new ticket from the kiosk.

Customer Tip:

All required inspections can be scheduled online at http://www.pdinet.pd.houstontx.gov/cohilms/webs/Inspection_Lookup.asp or by contacting the Building Inspection Line at 713-222-9922.

The owner can only schedule building permit inspections. All other inspections must be scheduled by a licensed contractor.

WHAT INSPECTIONS SHOULD BE EXPECTED?

All required inspections are listed on the permit job card. The following are some typical inspections that are performed for most driveway repair projects. **These inspections may change depending on each project's scope of work.**

Traffic (Office of City Engineer) Inspections

- After culvert, curb/headway is set
- When rebar is set
- After gravel is laid
- After driveway is filled and paved

Flood Inspections (Only If Project Is In The 100-year Floodplain, Floodway Or Conveyance Zone)

- Pre-Construction
- Pre-Fill Mitigation Certificate (prior to introducing any dirt or building materials for site)
- Second Elevation Certification (after pouring foundation and prior to framing)
- Final Sitework (upon completion of all work outside of the building)
- Third Elevation Certificate (upon completion of structure)

LINKS TO APPLICATIONS, FORMS AND SAMPLE DRAWINGS

The below documents can be accessed by clicking the hyperlinks or by visiting www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/code-enforcement/publications.html

Applications and Forms

1. [Sidewalk – Driveway Curb & Gutter – Culvert Parking Lot Permit](#)
2. [Sidewalk, Driveway, Curb & Gutter Builders Bond](#)
3. [Project Cost Estimation Worksheet](#) (Flood Requirement Only)

Sample Drawings and Other Useful Information

1. [Residential Driveway with Concrete Curb](#)
2. [Residential Driveway with Open Ditch](#)
3. [Conveyance Zone FAQ](#)
4. [Infrastructure Design Manual \(IDM\)](#)
5. [GIMS - How to Check Floodplain Status](#)