

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following FAQs are intended to provide property owners, businesses, and developers the necessary tools to assist in the development of property in Downtown Dallas.

Please note, this list is not exhaustive, and it is recommended to consult with the City of Dallas prior to the submission of any application as links to documents and resources below may not be adequately updated. It is the responsibility of the developer to ensure that each process step is properly addressed and the correct forms are submitted to the City of Dallas.

ZONING

What is zoning?

Simply, zoning is a regulatory tool used by cities to determine how land can be developed and used. Cities are divided into “zones” (e.g., residential, industrial, etc.), in which certain land uses are allowed or prohibited, and other regulations (e.g., building size and height) are denoted.

What is my property zoned?

To determine the zoning for your property, visit <https://gis.dallascityhall.com/zoningweb/>.

1. Once on the website, select the “Locate Property” tab from the menu on the left-hand side of the mapping tool.
2. Type in your property address in the “Street Address” text box and hit the “Locate” button. A flag pops up on the map, locating the property.
3. Select the “Legend” tab from the menu on the left-hand side of the map. Expand the “Dallas Zoning” category by selecting the “plus” sign. Un-check the boxes next to each category under the “Dallas Zoning” heading to clear the map of its default presentation of all zoning categories. Select the “Base Zoning” category to display the property’s zoning.
4. For more information on your property, select the “i” icon from the menu in the upper right-hand side of the map. Move your cursor to the map and select your property. A text window should appear with additional information regarding the zoning and other regulatory information for your property.

Most of the property in Downtown Dallas is zoned CA-1(A) or is part of a Planned Development District (PD).

CA-1(A) zoning accommodates existing development in the central area of the city, encourages the most appropriate future use of land, and is designated as an area of historical, cultural, and architectural importance and significance. To see what types of development are allowed in CA-1(A) zoning, see the [City Code](#).

A Planned Development District (PD) is a special zoning district that provides flexibility in the planning and construction of development projects by allowing a combination of land uses developed under a uniform plan that protects contiguous land uses and preserves natural features of a specific area. PDs are intended for larger scale, mixed-use development that would not be possible in a standard zoning district. Development standards of each PD, such as the permitted uses, height, and setbacks, are listed

in the ordinance establishing the district. Downtown Dallas contains five PDs: [PD 145](#), [PD 357](#), [PD 619](#), [PD 708](#), and [PD 715](#).

How can I change the zoning of my property?

Follow the instructions in [this document](#) to begin the process to change the zoning of your property.

How long is the zoning change application process?

The zoning change application process will take approximately four to five months. The process is as follows:

- Application is submitted
- Application is reviewed by staff
- Application is reviewed and approved by the City Plan Commission
- Application is reviewed and approved by City Council

Please contact us info@downtowndallas.com if you have any further questions.

RIGHT-OF-WAY LICENSING

When do I need to obtain a license to use the right-of-way?

A license is needed to install the following items on or over the right-of-way (i.e., the sidewalk) adjacent to your property:

- Sidewalk cafés
- Awnings or canopies with or without a premise sign (i.e., lettering)
- Streetscape elements, including landscaping (and applicable irrigation systems), public artwork, lighting, benches, flag poles, bollards, and trash cans
- Monument signs

How do I obtain a right-of-way license?

For right-of-way use other than a sidewalk café, an application and appropriate application fee must be submitted to the City of Dallas Sustainable Development and Construction Department. See the [Right-of-Way License Checklist](#) for specific documents and fees required. Additional information can be found on the City of Dallas license [website](#).

For sidewalk cafés, a different [application](#) (and application fee) is to be submitted to the City of Dallas Sustainable Development and Construction Department.

The City of Dallas encourages all applicants to consult with a Real Estate Specialist prior to applying for a right-of-way license.

What are the fees associated with the various right-of-way licenses?

The fees for right-of-way licenses vary per element. The fee schedule is as follows:

License Type	License Fee	Billing Term
Landscaping and applicable irrigation system	\$100	One-time

Awnings and canopies (without sign)	\$100/awning	One-time
Awnings and canopies (with sign)	Calculated per sq. ft.	Annual
Monument sign	\$100/sign	One-time
Streetscape (lights, benches, trash cans, etc.)	\$100/element	One-time
Signs, wireless cells, other	Calculated per formula	Annual
Sidewalk café	\$200	Annual

What other requirements are there for a sidewalk café?

All sidewalk cafés must follow the City of Dallas [Sidewalk Café Design Standards](#).

Other application and document requirements can be found on the City’s sidewalk café [website](#).

Are A-frame or sandwich board signs allowed on Downtown sidewalks?

No. Temporary signs, such as A-frames or sandwich boards, are not allowed on any Downtown sidewalk.

How long is the right-of-way license approval process?

The right-of-way license approval process takes approximately four to six months. The process is as follows:

- Application is submitted
- Application is routed to various City of Dallas departments for review
- Summary memo of department responses prepared by Real Estate staff
- License fees are determined
- Draft ordinance is prepared, reviewed, and approved by City Attorney’s Office
- Applicant reviews and approves draft ordinance and related documents
- Ordinance is approved by City Council

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SIGN REGULATIONS

Can I put a sign up for my business?

Yes, but a sign permit must first be obtained by the City of Dallas Sustainable Development and Construction Department.

When is a sign permit required?

A sign permit is required to erect:

1. Signs having an effective area greater than 20 square feet
2. Signs having a height in excess of eight feet
3. Illuminated signs
4. Signs with moving elements
5. Signs erected or to be erected in or over any public roadway
6. Signs projecting more than 18 inches from any wall, roof, parapet, or eave
7. Signs located in a Special Provision Sign District (SPSD)

A Certificate of Appropriateness (CA) must be obtained prior to the issuance of a sign permit if your business is located in a Special Provision Sign District (see definition below) or in a historic district. Applications for a CA can be obtained and submitted at Building Inspection, located at the Oak Cliff Municipal Center, 320 E. Jefferson Blvd., Dallas 75203. CAs are reviewed by the Sustainable Development and Construction Department and are forwarded to the Special Sign District Advisory Committee or Arts District Sign Advisory Committee to review and make a recommendation to the City Plan Commission for final approval.

Additional, more restrictive sign regulations may apply if your business is located in a designated historic district or building. Most historic district/building ordinances can be found on the City of Dallas Historic Preservation Office [website](#), and contain provisions for placing signs on historic buildings or buildings within historic districts.

Specific documents and fees required for individual sign permit applications can be found in the following checklists:

- [Sign Permit Application Checklist – Attached Signs](#)
- [Sign Permit Application Checklist – Detached Signs](#)
- [Sign Permit Application Checklist – Signs in a Special Provision Sign District](#)

What is a Special Provision Sign District (SPSD)?

A SPSP is a geographic area where standard sign regulations are modified to be more restrictive (or lenient) than what the normal provisions in the Dallas Development Code allow. SPSP regulations are required to enhance, preserve, and develop the character, quality, and property values of the designated SPSP areas.

Downtown Dallas contains several SPSP areas, including: the [Arts District Sign District](#) (including three subdistricts), [Arts District Extension Area Sign District](#) (including three subdistricts), [Downtown Special Provision Sign District](#) (including eight subdistricts), [Farmers Market Sign District](#) (including two subdistricts), and [West End Historic Sign District](#) (including two subdistricts). Click the links to determine the specific regulations within each SPSP.

How do I know which SPSP and/or historic district my building is in?

Follow the zoning map instructions in the previous section titled Zoning to determine the zoning for your property.

Can I put a videoboard on my building?

Videoboards are allowed in the Downtown Special Provision Sign District (Retail Subdistricts A and B only) and are only permitted by a Special Use Permit (SUP). However, according to the [Dallas Development Code](#), only 15 videoboards are allowed to be erected in these areas. As of July 2019, 14 of the 15 SUPs for a videoboard are active.

A code amendment would need to be approved by City Council to allow more than 15 videoboards in the specified areas.

Can I put a supergraphic on my building?

Supergraphics (large, billboard-like advertisements attached to building facades) are allowed on certain buildings in the Inner Loop Area of Downtown, comprised of the following SPSP subdistricts: Main Street Subdistrict, Retail Subdistrict A, Retail Subdistrict B, Convention Center Subdistrict, General CBD Subdistrict, Akard Station Subdistrict, and Whitacre Tower Subdistrict.

Per the [Dallas Development Code](#), 22 supergraphic signs are allowed in the specified areas. As of July 2019, all 22 supergraphic signs have been permitted. The supergraphic permits will sunset in August 2027.

How long is the sign approval process?

The sign approval process takes approximately six to eight months. The approval process is as follows:

- Application is submitted to City staff for review
- Application is reviewed and approved by the Special Provision Sign District Advisory Committee
- Application is reviewed and approved by the Landmark Commission, if the proposed sign is located in a historic district
- Application is reviewed and approved by the City Plan Commission
- Videoboards and supergraphics are reviewed and approved by City Council

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No. Temporary signs, such as A-frames or sandwich boards, are not allowed on any Downtown sidewalk.

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SPECIFIC USE PERMITS

What is a Specific Use Permit (SUP)?

A SUP provides a means for developing certain uses – typically not allowed by right – in a manner in which the specific use will be compatible with other uses in a particular zoning district and will not adversely affect adjacent property and the overall character of the neighborhood. The SUP contains special requirements and restrictions particular to the use for which the SUP is granted.

When is a SUP required?

A SUP is required when developing a use that is not allowed by right in a particular zoning district. See the zoning ordinances for [CA-1\(A\)](#), [PD 145](#), [PD 357](#), [PD 619](#), [PD 708](#), and [PD 715](#) to determine which uses are permitted via SUP.

How do I apply for a SUP?

Application and document requirements can be found in the City of Dallas [Specific Use Permit Application Packet](#).

SUPs are granted by the City Council.

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SPECIAL EVENTS

What is a special event?

A special event is a temporary, outdoor activity, including (but not limited to) festivals, markets, parades, races, and carnivals, in which large groups may gather within a public or private space.

Can I host a special event in Downtown?

Yes. However, a special event permit will need to be obtained from the City of Dallas Office of Special Events if the event has an expected attendance of 100 people or more and includes one or more of the following items:

- Restricts access to public property
- The sale of merchandise, food, or beverage (alcoholic and/or non-alcoholic)
- Erection of a tent larger than 399 square feet or erection of multiple tents with a cumulative area of over 399 square feet
- Installation of a temporary stage, band shell, outdoor projection technology, trailer, van, grandstand, bleachers, or portable toilets for public use
- Use of City Hall Plaza
- All moving events (runs, walks, rides, special event parades, and processions)
- Placement of event signage including temporary no parking, directional, over-sized, sponsor, or identification signs or banners that are placed in or over the right-of-way, or on private property where otherwise prohibited by ordinance
- Clean zone activation
- Closing or restricting of a public street, lane, alley, or sidewalk – *regardless of the expected total attendance*

The special event permit application and other required documents are listed on the [Special Event Permits](#) page of the City of Dallas Office of Special Events.

What are the application deadlines?

Special event application deadlines are as follows:

Event Type	Application Deadline
Events with no street closures	30 days prior to event
Events within a set footprint, with static street closures	60 days prior to event
Events not confined to a set footprint (moving event)	120 days prior to event

Can I host an event in a Downtown park?

Yes. A separate application process is required to host an event in the following Downtown parks: Belo Garden, Cancer Survivors Plaza, Ferris Plaza, Lubben Plaza, Main Street Garden, Pacific Plaza (open late fall 2019), and Pegasus Plaza.

A permit to use a Downtown park will be required if an event includes one or more of the following items:

- Expected attendance of over 50 people
- Limiting public access to the park or a sub-area of the park
- Use of park electrical outlets
- Use of park water system (non-potable)
- Use of a generator
- Use of amplified sound
- Use of pop-up tents (a.k.a. EZ-UPS)
- Sale of any product or service
- Sale or distribution of food to the general public

If your event does not include any of the items listed above, you are welcome to use a Downtown park for your event on a first-come, first-served basis.

For more information regarding special events in Downtown parks, please contact [Juan Galvan](#), Community Activation Coordinator for DDI.

CERTIFICATES OF OCCUPANCY

What is a Certificate of Occupancy (CO)?

A CO is a document issued by the City of Dallas that certifies a building's compliance with building codes and other applicable regulations and indicates that the building is in a condition suitable for occupation.

When is a CO required?

Except for single-family and duplex uses, the City of Dallas requires a CO before a person uses or changes the use of a building, a portion of a building, or land within the city. A new CO is needed for:

- The first use of a building or land
- A change of use of a building or land
- A tenant change on an existing CO
- An existing use increases or decreases the floor area of occupied space

Before the building can be occupied and electricity turned on, the building must be inspected and approved by building, electrical, and plumbing/mechanical inspectors.

All food establishments require a Food Establishment Permit Application and inspection prior to obtaining a CO. Information regarding the Food Establishment Permit process is available [here](#).

How can I get a CO?

Follow the instructions in the [CO Checklist](#) prior to completing the [CO Application](#). The Checklist and Application can be submitted in person at the City of Dallas Permit Center, located at the Oak Cliff Municipal Center, 320 E. Jefferson Blvd., Dallas 75203. The cost to obtain a CO is \$215.00 plus a \$65.00 Code Compliance fee (a total of \$280.00).

What is a Temporary CO?

A Temporary CO allows occupancy of a structure or suite while certain non-safety related work, such as landscaping, is nearing completion. A Temporary CO can be obtained from the City of Dallas and costs \$104.00. A Temporary CO must be applied for in person at a [Building Inspection District Office](#).

How long does it take to get a CO?

If the proposed use is the same as the previous use, a CO application can be approved and inspections scheduled "over the counter," while you wait at the Permit Center. If the proposed use is different from the previous use, you may be required to provide a site plan with a parking analysis and building plans. The time needed to review the plans may take up to two weeks depending on the complexity of the project.

Inspections are performed between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. The building must be accessible to inspectors on the day they are scheduled, and the correct address and suite numbers must be posted. If the building is not accessible and ready for inspection, a reinspection fee will be charged for the first reinspection.

When the CO is approved by all inspectors, the electricity will be released to Oncor Electric and the CO will be mailed to the applicant for posting at the site.

Please contact us at info@downtowndallas.com if you have any further questions.

PARKING-RELATED PERMITS AND LICENSES

What is a commercial loading zone?

A commercial loading zone is a designated area (similar to a metered parking space) that are designed for the loading and unloading of commercial vehicles (i.e., delivery trucks). Loading zones are intended to provide access for commercial deliveries, reduce double parking, and improve traffic flow.

How can I request a commercial loading zone?

A commercial loading zone permit can be purchased at the Parking and Safelight Customer Service Payment Center, located at the Oak Cliff Municipal Center, 320 E. Jefferson Blvd., Room 100, Dallas 75203. Annual commercial loading zone permits are \$50.00.

Can I set up valet services for my business/building?

Yes. A [valet license application](#) must be submitted to the City of Dallas Parking Enforcement, located at the Oak Cliff Municipal Center, 320 E. Jefferson Blvd., Room 212, Dallas 75203.

A valet parking license is required when a commercial establishment or commercial activity uses a valet parking service that 1) operates on the public right-of-way or 2) operates on private property but requires the use of public right-of-way for the maneuvering of vehicles.

Can I use a metered parking space for a use other than parking?

Yes, a metered parking space can be temporarily "hooded" or reserved only for temporary construction projects or for special events (e.g., parades, festivals). Meter hooding is not permitted for personal use.

How do I hood a parking meter?

A [Hooding Permit Application](#) must be submitted prior to the hooding of any meter(s). A 48-hour notice must be given for all hooding requests. Applications and payment can be submitted at the Parking and Safelight Customer Service Payment Center, located at the Oak Cliff Municipal Center, 320 E. Jefferson Blvd., Room 100, Dallas 75203.

How much will it cost to hood a parking meter?

There is a one-time \$55.00 labor fee, plus \$1.00 labor fee for each hooded meter and 70% of potential revenue from each requested meter.

The potential revenue formula is: number of requested meters (x) meter rate per hour (x) number of days (x) number of effective hours.

Can I remove a parking meter?

Yes, but the meter removal must be in conjunction with a construction project, special event, or permanent changes to the right-of-way or adjacent land use. Meter removals are not permitted for personal use.

How do I remove a parking meter?

A [Meter Removal Permit Application](#) must be submitted prior to the removal of any meter(s). A 48-hour notice must be given for all removal requests. Applications and payment can be submitted at the Parking and Safelight Customer Service Payment Center, located at the Oak Cliff Municipal Center, 320 E. Jefferson Blvd., Room 100, Dallas 75203.

How much will it cost to remove a parking meter?

Temporary Meter Removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-time \$55.00 labor fee, plus a \$179.00 labor fee for each meter to be removed and reinstalled, and • 70% of the potential revenue from the requested meter (Formula: number of requested meters (x) meter rate per hour (x) number of days (x) number of effective hours)
Permanent Meter Removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be determined upon submittal of permit application

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THOROUGHFARE PLAN

Can I propose operational changes to a particular street in Downtown?

Yes. First, consult the [CBD Streets and Vehicular Circulation Plan](#), [CBD Plan Table](#), and [interactive map](#) to determine the current operations of the street in question. If a change is desired, a [Thoroughfare/CBD Plan Amendment Application](#) will need to be submitted to the City of Dallas Transportation Department for processing and analysis.

How much is a thoroughfare plan amendment?

The application fee for a thoroughfare plan amendment is \$2,660.00 for the first quarter mile (1,320 linear feet) plus \$0.87 for each additional linear foot of the street on which operational changes are proposed.

How long is the thoroughfare plan amendment process?

Street operation changes are granted by the City Council. The thoroughfare plan amendment process takes about 18 weeks to complete. The process is as follows:

- Application is submitted and reviewed by City staff
- Application is reviewed and approved by the Transportation Committee of the City Plan Commission
- Application is reviewed and approved by the City Plan Commission
- Application is reviewed and approved by City Council

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