



Nonresidential Uses in Thurston County

What are nonresidential uses?

Nonresidential uses are any use on a property that is not residential in nature or is not accessory to a residential use. This includes businesses, some home occupations or home based industries where the public or customers are served, religious groups, businesses or not-for-profit groups.

Where can I find the Thurston County regulations for nonresidential structures?

This handout will provide brief information about the codes and the departments involved in the review and approval of nonresidential use.

A presubmission conference is now required as part of the submittal process for non-residential uses. The information in this guide will help you prepare for a successful presubmission conference.

What is a presubmission conference?

A presubmission conference is a meeting between the applicant and/or a representative of the applicant and the County staff. The presubmission conference form can be found at:

http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/permitting/apps-forms/subapps/NonRes_subapps/presubmission-conference-application-sa033.pdf

The fees can be located at:

<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/permitting/fees/fees-home.html>

At the presubmission conference you will be provided with the requirements for your proposed use solely based on the information you provided.

If you research the requirements prior to the meeting, you can ask specific questions about

certain use conditions and will not leave the meeting feeling overwhelmed.

You may also find that the use is not allowed or cannot be adequately financed and thereby save the cost of the presubmission conference.

The presubmission conference information provided is not binding. Check for new ordinances prior to submitting permit applications.

What research can I do by myself?

Start by gathering the information about the land where the use will be located. The tax parcel number will be required for most documents and is used by all departments to track information about a parcel.

As you review the regulations ask yourself how will you comply with:

- Planning: zoning, aesthetic and environmental issues
- Development Review: storm water management, roads, grading.
- Health: sanitation, drinking water, food, school/pools, hazardous waste.
- Fire: site access, fire flow, fire hazards
- Building: exiting, structural, accessibility, energy codes.

The following is a short synopsis of issues by department that may affect a use. It is not a comprehensive list. There may be additional issues that come up in the presubmission conference.

Planning

Is the land zoned for your use?

Thurston County Permit Assistance Center

2000 Lakeridge Drive SW, Bldg 1, Second Floor; Olympia, WA 98502
Phone: (360) 786-5490; TDD line: (360) 754-2933; Fax: (360) 754-2939

www.co.thurston.wa.us/permitting

Zoning sets livability standards for an area. These include restrictions on uses as well as requirements for setbacks to property lines, landscaping, parking, lighting, signs, and other permitting requirements. Some uses are allowed outright and others may only be allowed through the special use permitting processes. Nonresidential uses that are allowed outright may still need to be reviewed through the site plan, environmental and design review processes.

Zoning information can be found at <http://www.geodata.org>. Geodata's 'online maps' or 'parcel search' have links to the assessor's information. Click on the parcel number.

At the top of the new page are additional links to maps and assessor data. Scroll down the page to determine the zoning and read through the other information about the parcel.

The map link provides geographical information about the parcel.

- Natural resources such as high ground water, flooding, wetland, buffers,
- Contours, aerial photos

This information is neither comprehensive nor conclusive and may need to be verified in the field.

Once the zoning is known you can visit Municode.com to review the requirements. <http://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=16720&stateId=47&stateName=Washington>

There are four zoning codes.

- Thurston County for areas outside the Urban Growth Areas
- Lacey Urban Growth Area
- Tumwater Urban Growth Area
- Olympia Urban Growth Area

There are other titles that you may want to review:

Critical areas – Title 17 for wetlands, endangered species, critical habitat, tree removal, or geologically sensitive areas
Platting and Subdivisions - Title 18
Shorelines – Title 19

There may be additional reviews and permits required by these ordinances.

Development Review

The requirements for property access, storm water management, road construction, and grading are reviewed through the Development Review section of Public Works.

Websites

For storm water:

<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/stormwater/>

For access and roads standards:

<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/publicworks/>

For site work:

http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/publicworks/devrev_2012.aspx

There are three steps in reviewing uses:

1. Scoping reports to determine if an abbreviated engineered plan can be submitted in lieu of an engineered plan.
2. Preliminary approval of the conceptual plan.
3. Final approval of the completed plans and reports.

There may be maintenance bonding requirements that will need to be completed prior to final approval of the use.

Environmental Health

Environmental health regulates food, schools, pools, solid and hazardous waste issues, drinking water and sewage disposal.

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Most nonresidential uses will require access to a public water supply. Connection to an established public water supply may be required if the use is within the Coordinated Water Service Area. If public water is not available then a new system may be developed.

Whether the developed water system will be a Group A regulated by the Washington State Department of Ecology or a Group B regulated by Thurston County is dependent on the number of people the system serves.

Public wells require a 100 foot well radius that is clear of any potential source of pollution. A well site inspection and installation permits are required.

Water systems must be approved and installed prior to issuance of a building permit.

Like water, most uses will require a means of sewage disposal and will need to connect to an established sewage disposal system or an onsite system when an established system is not available. If an existing septic is on site, a designer will need to establish that the system can be used.

Businesses may need integrated pest management plans or business pollution prevention plans. If food service is proposed then an application to the food section will be required.

For detailed information on these requirements visit the health department website at:
http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehadm/rules_regs.html.

Fire

Sprinklers

In Thurston County non-residential uses typically have no access to fire hydrants to supply water to fight a fire. The County has set fire flow standards and ways to mitigate the need for onsite hydrants.

Sprinkler systems may also be required when buildings contain certain occupancies per International Fire Code (IFC) Chapter 9 as well as for square footage per Thurston County Ordinance Title 14.32.

Annual sprinkler system maintenance will add cost to your use. There will be costs associated with monitoring by a central station monitor.

Visit

<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/firemarshal/document/s/construction/fire-flow-handout.pdf> to review the options for complying.

Operational permits and safety inspections

Certain uses require operational permit to operate welding, chemicals, and other high hazard uses. A complete list of operational permits may be found at:

<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/firemarshal/permits.htm>

Uses, other than a group U occupancy, require an annual safety inspection. The inspector looks for fire hazards, extinguisher, and other fire equipment maintenance information. The fee for the inspection and any operational permits are billed annually.

Fire Alarms

Fire detection and/or manual alarms are required in certain occupancies per IFC chapter 9. Where fire alarms are used to mitigate fire flow, the system must be a full coverage system to allow for quicker response by the fire department. Fire alarms require central station monitoring.

Building Codes

The building codes cover the structural, life-safety, accessibility, mechanical, plumbing, and energy code requirements for a structure.

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Thurston County adopts and modifies the building codes that are adopted by the state of Washington through Title 14. Title 14 may be found at www.municode.com.

Nonresidential permits.

If you are moving into an existing structure you will need a tenant improvement permit if the use is the same or similar, otherwise you need a change of use permit.

Existing structures that are a change of use must comply with the requirements for the new occupancy.

An engineer is required to review all nonresidential structural components when they cannot comply with the prescriptive requirements of the International Building Code. Some structures may require a structural engineer depending on the occupancy. Ask the engineer to be sure.

The State of Washington Department of Licensing has additional requirements for when an architect is not required for nonresidential uses. The following do not require an architect.

For structures: If the structure is to be used for a residential building of up to and including four dwelling units or a farm building or is a structure that is used in connection with, or auxiliary to, a residential building or farm building such as a garage, barn, shed, or shelter for animals or machinery;

Building of any occupancy up to four thousand square feet of construction;
Any person from designing buildings or doing other design work for structures 4000 square feet or larger when plans are stamped by a registered engineer or architect.

Design-build construction by registered general contractors if the structural design services are performed by a registered engineer;

Any person from designing buildings or doing other design work for any structure *prior* to the time of filing for a building permit; or

Nonresidential uses require access to accessible toilet facilities per Chapter 29 of the Building Code. This must include hot and cold running water provided by a public water supply. Where personnel is limit to a single employee on site and customers only pick up or drop off work related items, a single accessible portable restroom may be used subject to the approval of the plans examiner.

Appointments with the nonresidential plans examiner are required for submittal. Development review scoping reports are required to be approved prior to submittal. Presubmission conferences must be completed prior to approval of the project. Any changes to the plans after plans submittal may be subject to an hourly review fee.

Plan review fees are not refundable.

The plans are forwarded to the applicable review group. When all departments have approved the use, the plans examiner will notify the applicant that the permit is ready to be purchased.

Fees and applications for the various permits can be located at www.thurston.wa.us.

Questions?

If you have questions please call (360)786-5490, and leave a message for the applicable department.

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