



## Background

Seattle's development regulations, including the Land Use and Building Codes, are complex—in part because they regulate the full range of development that is possible throughout the city. Code language can be ambiguous for some situations, and very specific for others. The more specific the language is, the less flexible DPD's response to a particular project can be. Conversely, the more ambiguous the language, the less predictable our interpretation may be.

Achieving the right balance between flexibility and predictability is a constant dilemma in developing regulatory policies. It is not unexpected therefore, that in some cases applicants or interested citizens may disagree with a DPD plan reviewer or inspector about how the code applies in a specific circumstance, or, how the process is being administered for their particular unique project.



**City of Seattle**  
**Department of Planning**  
**and Development**  
[www.seattle.gov/dpd](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd)

# Resolving Development or Land Use Permit Disagreements

At DPD we are committed to continuously improving our customer service and responsiveness. Stakeholders like you have told us that quickly clearing up disagreements about the permit process and policy or technical code issues will reduce delays in permitting. We agree, and have taken steps to ensure that we promptly address any disagreements you may have about how your application is proceeding or how the code applies to your project. In the long term, we believe our prompt attention to resolving disagreements will reduce correction requests, enhance follow-through on agreements, and improve both plan quality and plan review consistency.

## How We're Responding

To assist in resolving disagreements we are reemphasizing quick resolution with our land use and construction supervisors and managers and clarifying the process by which disagreements are resolved. By ensuring that production/process and policy/technical issues are overseen separately, we can focus supervisory attention on both types of issues without adding additional staff.

## How to Resolve a Permit Disagreement

### STEP 1

If you disagree with assigned staff about how a process problem will be resolved or about how a policy or technical issue affects a specific project, you may wish to ask the assigned staff person's supervisor to review the situation.

You will find the appropriate supervisor by referring to the list on the back, or by asking the assigned staff person for the supervisor's name and phone number. If the supervisor is not immediately available, s/he will return your call within 24 hours. The supervisor will talk with you about your disagreement, reviewing the circumstances with you and the assigned staff. After appropriate consideration—usually within a day—the supervisor will provide a verbal answer.

*Details on back...*

# How to Resolve a Permit Disagreement, *cont.*

## STEP

**1**  
*cont.*

### Contact a Supervisor

#### CONSTRUCTION PERMIT SUPERVISORS

##### Process or Service-Level Complaints

- Applications, appointments and expedited (non-routed) projects:
  - Steve Burns  
(206) 684-7736, [steve.burns@seattle.gov](mailto:steve.burns@seattle.gov)
  - Vernon Beach  
(206) 615-0729, [vernon.beach@seattle.gov](mailto:vernon.beach@seattle.gov)
- Review times and process disagreements for routed plans:
  - Dave Hudacek  
(206) 615-1740, [david.hudacek@seattle.gov](mailto:david.hudacek@seattle.gov)
- Scheduling presubmittal conference appointments:
  - Bob McElhose (Land Use Presubs)  
(206) 386-9745, [bob.mcelhose@seattle.gov](mailto:bob.mcelhose@seattle.gov)
  - Vernon Beach (Construction Presubs)  
(206) 615-0729, [vernon.beach@seattle.gov](mailto:vernon.beach@seattle.gov)

##### Zoning Code Disagreements

- Zoning review production:
  - Janet Oslund  
(206) 386-9738, [janet.oslund@seattle.gov](mailto:janet.oslund@seattle.gov)
- Zoning technical decision-making:
  - Alan Oiye  
(206) 233-3822, [alan.oiye@seattle.gov](mailto:alan.oiye@seattle.gov)

##### Construction Codes Disagreements

- Site development (drainage, erosion control, side sewers):
  - Michelle Macias  
(206) 684-3068, [michelle.macias@seattle.gov](mailto:michelle.macias@seattle.gov)
- Geotechnical:
  - Susan Chang  
(206) 386-9785, [susan.chang@seattle.gov](mailto:susan.chang@seattle.gov)
- Energy/Mechanical:
  - Robby Liem  
(206) 233-3808, [robby.liem@seattle.gov](mailto:robby.liem@seattle.gov)
- Building code:
  - Rick Lupton  
(206) 615-0730, [rick.lupton@seattle.gov](mailto:rick.lupton@seattle.gov)
- Structural engineering:
  - Steve Pfeiffer  
(206) 233-7189, [steve.pfeiffer@seattle.gov](mailto:steve.pfeiffer@seattle.gov)

#### MASTER USE PERMIT (MUP) SUPERVISORS

##### Process or Service-Level Complaints

- MUP application and appointments:
  - Bob McElhose, (206) 386-9745, [bob.mcelhose@seattle.gov](mailto:bob.mcelhose@seattle.gov)
- MUP permit processing:
  - Janet Oslund, (206) 386-9738, [janet.oslund@seattle.gov](mailto:janet.oslund@seattle.gov)

##### MUP Discretionary Decision Disagreements

- Plats, SEPA, Variances, Conditional Uses, and Rezones:
  - Jerry Suder, (206) 386-4069, [jerry.suder@seattle.gov](mailto:jerry.suder@seattle.gov)
  - Cheryl Waldman, (206) 233-3861, [cheryl.waldman@seattle.gov](mailto:cheryl.waldman@seattle.gov)
- Design Review Issues:
  - Bruce Rips, (206) 386-1392, [bruce.rips@seattle.gov](mailto:bruce.rips@seattle.gov)

## STEP

**2**

### Contact a Manager

If the supervisor's answer is one that you continue to disagree with and you feel the decision does not correctly apply to your project, you may request review of the issue by writing to the appropriate manager. In order to achieve finality with an answer from the manager that will be relied upon by all involved, resolution of the disputed issue should be sought in writing. Please send your letter to the appropriate manager below c/o DPD, 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000, PO Box 34019, Seattle, WA 98124-4019:

- Production issues for discretionary review MUPs and production issues related to zoning review on all permit applications:
  - Roberta Baker, Manager
- Production issues related to building code, structural, energy, drainage and geotechnical reviews on routed construction permit applications:
  - Andy Higgins, Manager
- Construction inspection issues:
  - Dave Cordaro, Manager
- Routing and issuance for all permit types:
  - Carlee Casey, Manager

The final decision-makers on technical and policy code issues, who act on the DPD Director's behalf, are:

- Construction: Jon Siu, Principal Engineer
- Land Use: Cliff Portman, Principal Planner

A written response will be made by the manager, usually within two weeks of the request, unless additional, time-consuming research, analysis or discussion is required. (The manager will let you know within a week of your request, if extra work will be needed). The manager will involve the assigned staff and supervisor to gain full understanding of the situation and inform them of the final resolution.

## STEP

**3**

### Contact the Director

We want to assist you as much as possible should a disagreement arise. If, after following the above process, you are still not satisfied that you have been given the highest of quality service, feel free to contact our Director of Operations, Bob Laird, at (206) 615-1312 or [bob.laird@seattle.gov](mailto:bob.laird@seattle.gov).