Planning & Development Services Newsletter

June 2015

Building a Better Community with You

Population: The June population estimate is 102,940

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City of College Station
Home of Texas A&M University®

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New Non-Residential Architectural Standards Adopted

On May 28th, the City Council approved an amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) regarding the Non-Residential Architectural Standards. The standards were initially adopted in 2003 and then expanded in 2004 as an economic development effort. Some revisions to the standards occurred over the years though significant revisions were identified as needing to be accomplished.

The Planning & Zoning Commission provided the overall guidance to the amendment effort with input from development community contacts including the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). The revisions represent a substantial overhaul to the standards while maintaining the general framework in which designers and reviewers are familiar.

The ordinance amendment addressed a variety of items such as changing how the standards apply to different building types, simplifies the manner in which the standards are written and organized, and provides additional design options, flexibility and opportunities to seek relief. Some of the major changes can be summarized as follows:

- Changed the standards to provide emphasis on more prominent areas and image corridors of the City while reducing or eliminating some requirements in areas that are not as prominent.
- Reduced the complexity of the ordinance by moving the non-architectural standards out of the architecture section and into the applicable parking, landscaping, and development standards sections. This change also allows architectural reviews to be done independent of site plans and thus allowing greater flexibility in the design process of developing a project.
- Increased the flexibility of the types and percentages of architectural features, materials and colors that can be used.
- Modified the applicability of some requirements to better apply to specific circumstances and not be a one size fits all approach that created unintended consequences.
- Created an alternative compliance review path to the prescriptive ordinance requirements by authorizing the Design Review Board (DRB) to consider and approve architectural designs from a registered architect that are innovative or address other unique circumstances.

The new standards can be found in UDO Article 7 'General Development Standards,' Section 12-7.10 at www.cstx.gov/UDO.

Amendment Proposed to the Unified Development Ordinance – Single-Family Parking

Planning & Development staff have drafted a proposed amendment to the City's "Single-Family Residential Parking Requirements for Platting" section of the Unified Development Ordinance. This is the section of the Subdivision Regulations that requires new single-family developments to mitigate future neighborhood parking problems and maintain certainty of emergency vehicle access through subdivision design. The ordinance was adopted in 2013 in response to a report generated by the Joint Neighborhood Parking Task Force in 2012. Through application of these requirements over the past several years, staff have identified amendments to make the requirements easier to understand and apply. The proposed amendments to Section 12-8.3.W. of the Unified Development Ordinance are intended to provide additional options and increased flexibility for single-family developments.

Proposed changes include:

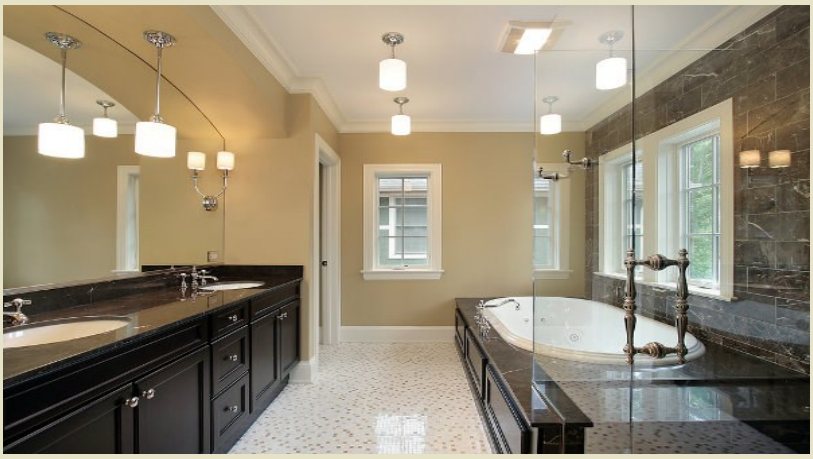
- Ordinance sections have been re-arranged for ease of use;
- An additional option that permits standard 27-foot wide streets with parking on one side (and no additional visitor parking) has been added;
- Now allows visitor parking spaces to back on to local streets when two or fewer spaces are provided in a pod;
- No longer allows on-street parking on narrow streets;
- The traffic calming section has been modified;
- Right-of-way requirements for wider streets are now defined;
- Alley-fed parking standards have been clarified / better defined.
- Staff met with the Joint Neighborhood Parking Task Force in June to discuss the proposed changes, and a two-week public review period (ending Friday, July,10, 2015) has been offered to get feedback on the amendment. The proposed ordinance language can be reviewed at the following weblink: http://cstx.gov/index.aspx?page=3844.

Tentative Public Hearing Dates:
Planning & Zoning Commission – August 6, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.
City Council – August 27, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

Background: In 2012, the City Council's Strategic Plan identified neighborhood parking issues as a problem affecting the City's Neighborhood Integrity. In response, the Joint Neighborhood Parking Task Force of the College Station City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission was formed through City Council Resolution. The Task Force created solutions to address neighborhood parking within three contexts: established neighborhoods with existing problems, established neighborhoods with emerging problems, and future neighborhoods with potential problems. City ordinances were adopted based on the report generated by the Task Force.

If you have questions, please contact Jennifer Prochazka, AICP, Principal Planner at jprochazka@cstx.gov or Danielle Singh, P.E., Transportation Planning Coordinator at dsingh@cstx.gov.

Luminaire (Light Fixture) Location in Bathrooms



With bathrooms getting smaller in some instances, and designers or builders getting more creative, the National Electrical Code clarifies the approved locations of light fixtures installed above and around bathtubs or shower areas. The code states that the restricted zone is measured by the bathtub or shower stall width plus 3 feet horizontally and 8 feet vertically from the top of the bathtub rim or shower stall threshold. All cord-connected, chain-hanging, pendant light fixtures, track lighting, and suspended (paddle) fans are prohibited in the above listed restricted zone. They shall be out of reach of an individual standing on the rim of a bathtub or shower. Approved light fixtures securely surface-mounted or recessed-mounted to walls and ceiling are permitted within the restricted zone.

Another thing to take into account when locating an electrical fixture in the bathroom is to install fixtures listed for damp locations. Where a light fixture is subject to shower spray, the light fixture must be listed for a wet location. Contact the City of College Station Building Division at 979.764.3570 with any questions.

Brian Binford
Building Official

Building Inspections:

MONTH	BUILDING	PLUMBING	ELECTRIC	MECHANICAL	LAWN	SIGN	POOL	TOTAL
JANUARY	371	261	163	126	35	2	8	966
February	477	293	240	191	5	4	8	1,223
MARCH	593	403	231	170	7	0	8	1,412
APRIL	495	302	272	238	33	20	14	1,374
MAY	525	350	285	253	44	1	10	1,468
JUNE	651	377	422	307	81	16	21	1,875
TOTAL	**3,112**	**1,986**	**1,613**	**1,285**	**243**	**43**	**69**	**8,345**

With the new TRAKiT software our residential permit types have been combined, the table below provides additional details to show the Residential Subtypes.

Residential Permit	No. of Permits Issued	Valuation
Single-Family (Detached)	38	$10,456,005
Townhomes	3	$358,950
Duplex	0	$0

BUILDING PERMIT TOTALS:

Month of June 2015						*Month of June 2014*		
Type of Permit	**Permit**	**Unit**	**Total Sq. Ft.**	**Heat Sq. Ft.**	**Amount**	**Permit**	**Unit**	**Amount**
ACCESSORY	4	0	220	0	$67,620.00	4		$140,000.00
ADDITION	8	4	4,533	3021	$269,930.00	5		$1,763,600.00
COMMERCIAL NEW	6	0	20,005	16458	$1,020,000.00	7		$1,022,770.00
DEMOLITION	4	0	0	0	$0.00	7	1	$479,700.00
POOL	9	0	0	0	$400,057.00	4		$131,000.00
REMODEL / RENOVATION	85	1	219,424	72859	$3,671,975.00	20		$1,295,361.00
REROOF	6	0	0	0	$40,979.99	5		$81,785.00
RESIDENTIAL	40	40	142,054	107706	$10,771,078.00	55	56	$10,029,979.00
SIGN	9	0	0	0	$0.00	13		$0.00
SLAB ONLY	1	0	14,788	0	$140,000.00	1		$48,900.00
TOTALS	**172**	**45**	**401,024**	**200,044**	**$16,381,639.99**	**121**	**57**	**$14,993,095.00**

January 01, 2015 - June 30, 2015						*January 01, 2014 - June 30, 2014*		
Type of Permit	**Permit**	**Unit**	**Total Sq. Ft.**	**Heat Sq. Ft.**	**Amount**	**Permit**	**Unit**	**Amount**
ACCESSORY	13	0	2,178	0	$163,570.00	13		$316,550.00
ADDITION	40	8	227,187	185,790	$4,930,020.00	35	5	$3,022,432.00
COMMERCIAL NEW	35	88	277,199	146,349	$33,562,025.00	44	88	$41,234,937.00
DEMOLITION	45	15	37,628	0	$277,700.00	30	18	$627,400.00
MULTI-FAMILY	12	161	272,131	147,540	$18,311,026.00	53	703	$56,084,421.00
OTHER STRUCTURES	2	0	0	0	$10,000.00	0		
POOL	40	0	5,381	0	$2,151,382.00	35		$1,577,972.00
REMODEL / RENOVATION	155	9	591,103	305,828	$10,584,956.26	113	15	$10,047,261.00
REROOF	33	0	0	0	$242,959.99	25		$778,102.00
RESIDENTIAL	494	502	1,415,814	1,077,260	$93,373,372.24	431	439	$71,972,544.00
SIGN	78	0	4,574	0	$80.00	105		$0.00
SLAB ONLY	60	0	161,140	0	$956,318.00	10		$2,627,564.00
TOTALS	**1007**	**783**	**2,994,335**	**1,862,767**	**$164,563,409.49**	**894**	**1,268**	**$188,289,183.00**

Tracking the Numbers

New Single-Family Homes:

⇧ **YTD - 1 yr** 11%

⇧ **YTD - 2 yr** 29%

Year-to-date, single-family home permits experienced an increase in quantity when compared to last year at this time, June 2014, and increased when compared with two years ago, June 2013.

New Commerical:

⇩ **YTD - 1 yr** - 20%

⇧ **YTD - 2 yr** 17%

Year-to-date, new commercial permits experienced a decrease in quantity when compared to last year at this time, June 2014, and increased when compared with two years ago, June 2013.

Total Permits:

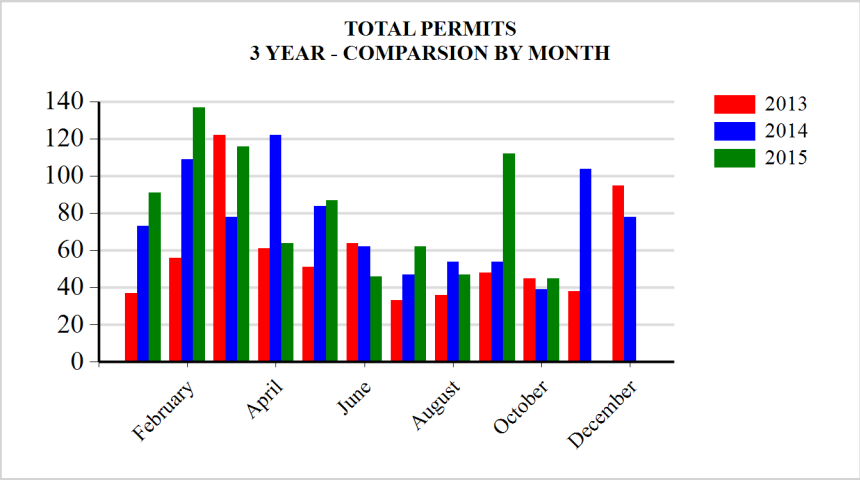
⇧ **YTD - 1 yr** 11%

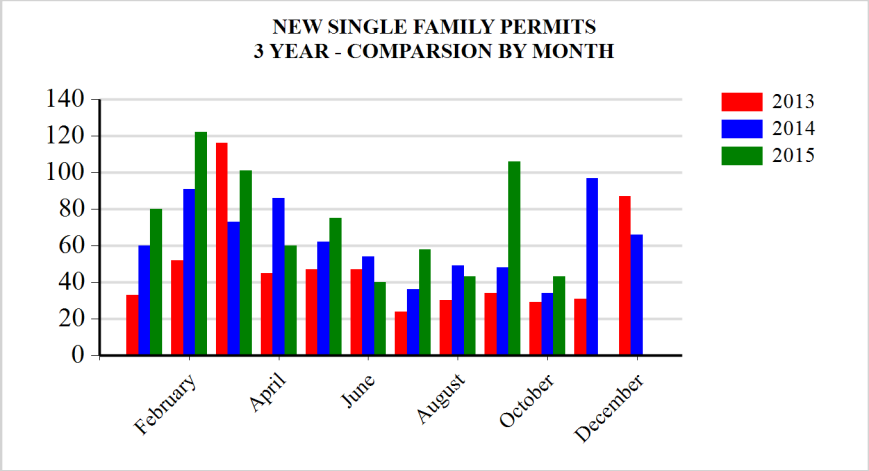
⇧ **YTD - 2 yr** 19%

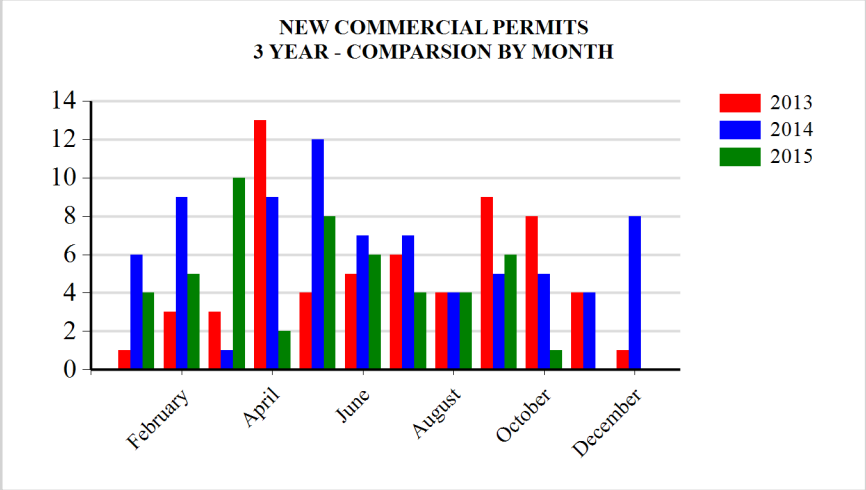
Year-to-date, total permits experienced an increase in quantity when compared to last year at this time, June 2014, and increased when compared with two years ago, June 2013.

PERMITS BY TYPE
YEAR TO DATE

Type of Permit	Permit	Unit	Amount
COMMERCIAL NEW	35	88	$33,562,025.00
MULTI-FAMILY	12	161	$18,311,026.00
REMODEL / RENOVATION	35	4	$9,469,152.26
RESIDENTIAL	351	363	$75,177,990.24





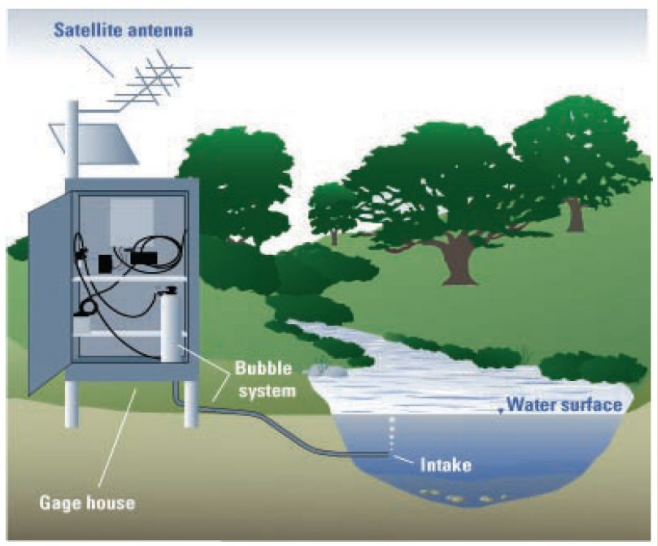


Local U.S. Geological Survey Streamgages

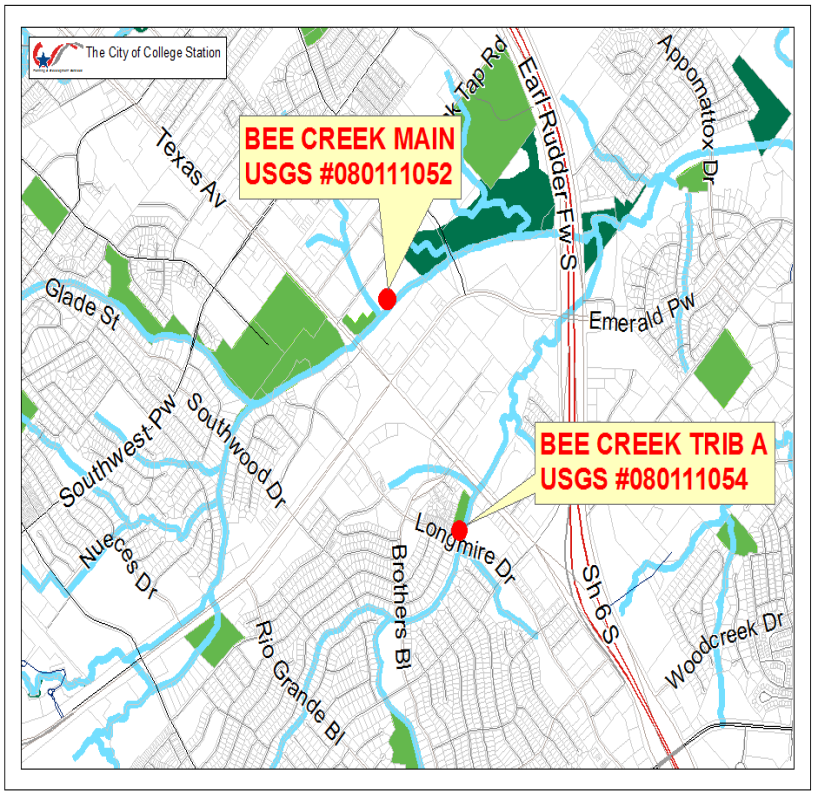
Recording Actual Flood Heights Resulting from Specific Rainfall Events

About a year ago the City entered into a contract with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) for the installation, operation, and maintenance of stream stations that will help provide actual field-measured data. The City of College Station's regulated floodplains impact hundreds of properties with values in the millions of dollars. The City has undertaken several major capital projects that are influenced by best available flood studies. Associated flood insurance rates and development regulation, as well as general impacts to many citizens is broad. Due to this significance, it is important for our flood studies to be as accurate as possible.

The stations provided for by this agreement will collect a continuous reading of stormflow data to compare the FEMA floodplain studies with measured rainfall through a mathematical relationship this directly corresponds to streamflows and depth. Measuring streamflow accurately, requires specialized instrumentation and personnel. USGS provides ongoing inspection and maintenance for the station instruments and data confirmation.



College Station has two sites (as pictured below) where USGS gages are installed and transmitting to the website. Directions to the links are below. One gage is on Bee Creek Main downstream of Texas Avenue South near the Police Station. The second is on Bee Creek Tributary A downstream of Longmire Drive in Longmire Park.



Access the USGS Data for the Local Gages

Data from these two USGS streamgages (as well as all USGS stations across the State) is available at: tx.usgs.gov. Directions to navigate: at the left side of the page under Data Center, click on the blue "text" link near the top. This page lists all the stream flow gages in the state. Scroll down to the Brazos River Basin. They are located at the top, station numbers are **08111052** (Bee Creek Main) and **08111054** (Bee Creek Trib A). Click the station numbers and you can navigate to select related data. You can also subscribe to receive email notifications when these creek locations exceed defined parameters, (i.e. certain flood depth, or rainfall amount, etc).

Additional technical information on streamgages is available on the USGS fact sheet "How Does a U.S. Geological Survey Streamgage Work?" at http://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2011/3001/.

For questions please contact Alan Gibbs, City Engineer via email at agibbs@cstx.gov or by phone at 979.764.3570.

New Planning and Development Map

The City now has a NEW Planning and Development Map. Find it by going to our website at www.cstx.gov and clicking on MAPS & GIS on the right. It is replacing the old Development Map. Below is information and tips to navigate the new map more easily.

This map features the ability to:

- View property information: Zoom to the property, click on the property parcel, and information appears in a pop-up window. Follow the Brazos Central Appraisal District hyperlink to view additional information about the property.
- View scanned plats: Turn on the Scanned Plats layer in the Layer Control. Then, click on subdivision and info appears in a pop-up window. First, click on the Show Related Records link in the pop-up window. Then, click on the Laserfische Path hyperlink in the pop-up table.

Icons explained:

The layer list is in the top left corner. Click on this button to turn layers on and off.

The legend is also in the top right corner. Click on this button see view how different layers that are on are symbolized on the map.

The query tool (top left corner) allows you to find and zoom to **subdivisions** and **parks** quickly.

The measurement tool (top left corner) allows you to measure distances and calculate areas.

The about icon provides a lot of the information referenced here.

TIPS

- To identify and see information about a layer on the map just click on the map and a box will pop up. Information about each of the layers that are checked on will be available. Flip through the layers with the arrow.
    - If you can't see everything in the box due to size limits on your screen, click on the map with your mouse and hold down. You can move the map with your mouse (similar to panning) which also moves the box so it can be viewed fully.
- To view aerial imagery (inside the city limits), you'll have to turn off the Background blocker Layer in the layer list.

If you have comments or questions, please contact the IT Department – GIS Division at gis@cstx.gov or Venessa Garza at 979.764.3674 or vgarza@cstx.gov.

Planner on Call
Frequently Asked Questions

The Planner-on-Call system helps over 1,800 people a year that call, email, or come into the P&DS office with questions related to planning and development. This section highlights some of the more common questions. If you have questions for the Planner on Call, please contact us at 979.764.3858 or POC@cstx.gov.

Q: What is the phone number to the ____ department?

A: For a comprehensive list of contact information for each City department, please call the main line at 979.764.3500 or refer to the City website at this location http://www.cstx.gov/directory.

Q: How do I submit my application(s)?

A: Planning and Development Services has a new application submittal service known as eTRAKiT available at https://etrakit.cstx.gov/etrakit3/ that allows all applications to be submitted online. This service also allows you to pay fees, submit supporting documents, view the status of your application, and view staff review comments. To submit an application, follow the outline below:

Q: How many hard copies do I need to submit?

A: Now that all applications can be submitted online, hard copies no longer need to be supplied with the applications. If any hard copies are needed under certain circumstances, City staff will request them from you after your application has been received.

1. Complete the appropriate application available at http://www.cstx.gov/applications and save it as a .PDF document.
2. If you have not already done so, you will need to send the following information to cspds@cstx.gov to have your account set up (once set up, we'll send you login information and then you can log into eTRAKiT and finish setting up your account):
    a. Company Name
    b. Contact Name
    c. Address
    d. Phone Number
    e. E-mail Address
3. Once you're logged into eTRAKiT, go to your Dashboard to view all applications that you have submitted and are linked to, to apply for new projects/permits/licenses, and to schedule inspections.
4. On the left side of the page, you can select to apply for a permit or a new project under their corresponding titles. The chart on the next page determines which category each application can be found under.
5. Enter all applicable information for the application you are submitting, upload the application and all required plan documents, and hit 'Next Step' at the bottom.
6. Check the applicant and owner information, then enter the engineer name and contact information, if applicable, and hit 'Next Step.'
7. Review all information on this page, find your fees, then select 'Next Step.'
8. Next is your confirmation page that will tell you how you can pay your fees.
9. You will receive a notification email once your application has gone through a completeness review and you have been assigned a project manager.

eTRAKitT Permit, Project & License types

Permits	Projects	Licenses
Building Permits	Abandonments	Rental Registration
Driveway Permits	Public Right of Way	Northgate Parking License
Tent Permits	Easement	
I-Vendor Permits	Alternative Parking Plan	
Northgate Outdoor Dining	Appeals/Waivers/Variances	
Special Event Permits	Administrative Adjustment	
Carnival/Circus Permits	Buffer Appeal	
Parade Permits	Driveway Appeal	
Sign Permits	Non-Residential Architectural Standards Appeal	
Banner Permits	Northgate Standards Appeal	
Grand Opening Permits	Special Exception	
	Written Interpretation	
	Zoning Variance	
	Architectural Reviews	
	Non-Residential Architectural Standards	
	Northgate Standards	
	Comprehensive Plan Amendment	
	Conditional Use Permit	
	Development Permit	
	Development Plat	
	Plats (all types)	
	License to Encroach	
	Municipal Utility District	
	Open Records Request	
	Pre-application Conference	
	Private Improvement in Public ROW	
	Rezoning	
	Right of Way Permit	
	Seismic License Agreement	
	Site Plan	
	Wolf Pen Creek Development	
	Zoning Letter	

Q: How many hard copies do I need to submit?

A: Now that all applications can be submitted online, hard copies no longer need to be supplied with the applications. If any hard copies are needed under certain circumstances, City staff will request them from you after your application has been received.

For additional information regarding eTRAKiT and applications, please contact the Planner-on-Call.