



City of River Falls Development Review Packet

Revised: June 2025

222 Lewis Street
River Falls, WI
www.rfcity.org

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Welcome

Thank you for choosing River Falls for your development project. We appreciate your confidence in us and your investment in our community.

As you begin the development review process, you will notice that we do not utilize a one-size-fits-all approach. We will work closely with you and your team of professionals to carefully review your site(s) from conceptual layout to full plan submittal.

Our staff-led development process:

- Establishes an open line of communication between you and City staff throughout the process;
- Builds in an early concept meeting to identify potential site-specific issues early in the process;
- Aims to build predictability into the process to shorten approval timelines; and
- Works with you to create development of lasting quality and community value.

Again, welcome. We look forward to our work together.

Sincerely,



Scot E. Simpson
City Administrator

Introduction

PURPOSE AND INTENT

The purpose of this document is to assist you in following the development processes of the City of River Falls. This guide is not intended to be comprehensive in explaining all the requirements and approvals but is meant to provide general information and help explain the process for obtaining approvals. Please see the City's ordinances, for a comprehensive set of regulations.

CITY CONTACTS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Amy Peterson, Community Development Director	715-426-3425
Becky Corson, Community Development Coordinator	715-941-2138
Keri Schreiner, Economic Development Manager	715-426-3469
Emily Shively, Assistant Director of Comm. Dev.	715-426-3437
Harley Mehlhorn, Senior Planner	715-426-3466
Dave Hovel, Building Inspector	715-426-3426
Angie Bond, Building Permit Tech/Code Comp. Officer	715-426-3427
Todd Nickleski, City Engineer	715-426-3409
Chris Buntjer, Senior Civil Engineer	715-426-3412
Adam Martinson, Municipal Project Manager	715-426-3457
Tyler Galde, Planning/ Engineering Technician	715-426-3424
Tamara Jaworski, Engineer Technician	715-426-3443
Brooks Ostendorf, Conservation and Parks Manager	715-426-3467

FIRE & POLICE

Justin Wilson, Fire Chief	715-426-3534
Gordon Young, Police Chief	715-426-3536

MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

Kevin Westhuis, Utilities Director	715-426-3442
Wayne Siverling, Electric Superintendent	715-426-3480

OTHER UTILITY CONTACTS

River Falls Municipal Utility	715-425-0906
St. Croix Gas	715-425-6177
Baldwin Telecom	715-684-3346
AT&T Distribution	715-839-5820
Comcast	800-934-6489

ENERGY INCENTIVES

Jenna Willi, WPPI Energy Services Manager	608-720-8081
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MEETING SCHEDULE

Applicable if rezoning, planned unit developments, or other are necessary for proposed development project.

CITY COUNCIL

Meetings held second and fourth Tuesday's each month at 6:30 pm

PLAN COMMISSION

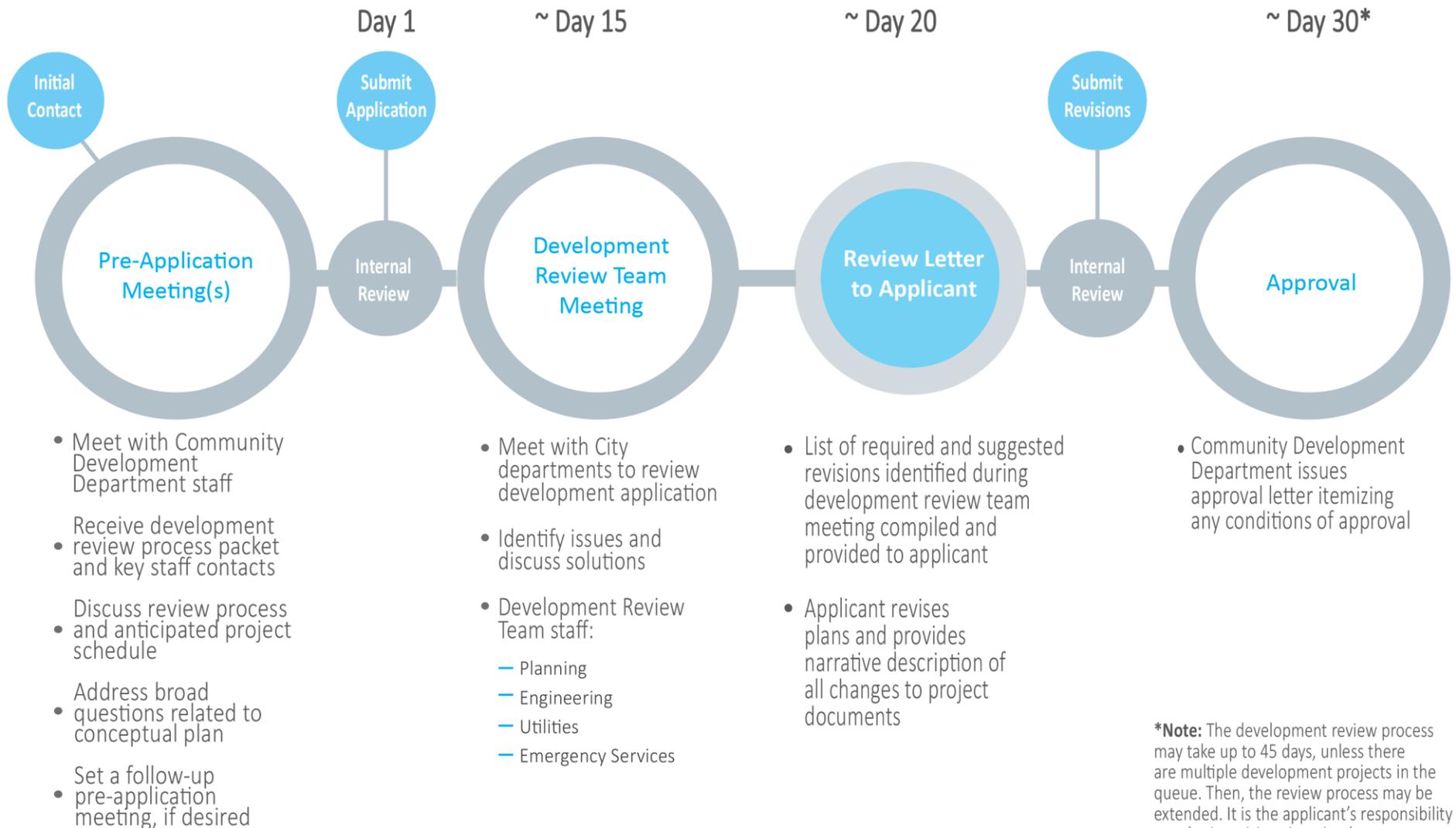
First Tuesday of every month at 6:30 pm

Submittal Deadline:

Standard - First day of the month preceding the Plan Commission meeting (at least 30 days prior to the next meeting).

PUD – 45 days prior to regularly scheduled Plan Commission meeting.

Development Review Process Overview



***Note:** The development review process may take up to 45 days, unless there are multiple development projects in the queue. Then, the review process may be extended. It is the applicant's responsibility to submit revisions in a timely manner to keep the review process on schedule.

Development Agreements

Development agreements are required for any project within the City that will result in the dedication of land to the public or the construction of public infrastructure (i.e. streets, water/sewer main, sidewalk/trail, etc.). A well-crafted development agreement is a storyboard for how a project will unfold and builds accountability and transparency into the development process. It details the obligations of both parties and lays out the plan for the project, clearly addressing scope, budget, schedule, risk-management, design, construction, oversight and approvals, close-out, regulatory compliance, change-management, and claims management.

Other Requirements (when applicable)

CSM/PLATS

A certified survey map or plat may be required to create buildable lots for a project. In addition to creating the development site, a CSM may be necessary to dedicate right-of-way or easements necessary for the project. In these instances, such projects shall adhere to [Chapter 16](#) of the Municipal Code. An application form and fee shall be submitted for all CSMs.

EASEMENTS

Drainage easements shall be provided where water courses, drainage ways, channels or streams run through a development site.

Right-of-way easements shall be dedicated of sufficient width for the intended use. If it is a public street, refer to the Official Map. Other right-of-way widths (i.e. trails or sidewalks) shall be determined during the plan review process.

Utility easements shall be dedicated and recorded for poles, wires, conduits, storm and sanitary sewers, gas, telephone, water mains or other utility lines. The width of easements shall be determined by the Utility Director and include the following restriction language lettered on the face of the plat, CSM, or dedication document: **Utility Easement Defined**—AN UNOBSTRUCTED EASEMENT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF ALL NECESSARY OVERHEAD. UNDERGROUND OR SURFACE PUBLIC UTILITIES INCLUDING RIGHTS TO CONDUCT TRIMMING ON SAID EASEMENT. THIS EASEMENT SHALL HAVE NO PERMANENT OBSTRUCTIONS (FENCES, TREES, SHRUBS, OR OTHER OBSTACLES) THAT INTERFERE WITH INSTALLATION, FUNCTION OR MAINTENANCE OF UTILITY SYSTEMS. PUBLIC UTILITIES SHALL NOT BE HELD LIABLE FOR ANY DAMAGE TO PROHIBITED OBSTRUCTIONS.

LETTER OF CREDIT AND/OR PERFORMANCE BOND

An irrevocable letter of credit shall be submitted for all public improvements related to a development project. In lieu of a letter of credit, the developer may submit a performance bond from a reputable bonding institution. The amount of the bond or letter of credit shall be in the amount of 120% of the value of the outstanding improvements and erosion control including warranties of completed work on a phase basis as determined by the City Engineer. The letter of credit or bond shall be valid for throughout the entire public improvement warranty period. The letter of credit or bond may require periodic renewal to secure the improvements through the warranty period.

Development Review Process

Development review is required for all new multi-family, special use and non-residential development projects (including building additions). River Falls operates a staff driven review process. Most reviews do not include Plan Commission or City Council review; however, staff and/or the developer could take the process to the governing bodies if deemed necessary.

STEP ONE: INFORMAL PRE-APPLICATION MEETING

To streamline project review, applicants are expected to schedule a pre-application meeting with the City. Prior to or at the meeting, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide a conceptual plan and a narrative description of the proposed project. At this meeting, staff will go through the development review process and timeline, provide contact information for key staff members, and discuss the scope and nature of the proposed development. This meeting provides an opportunity for both staff and the applicant to ask broad questions pertaining to the subject site and the conceptual plan. This meeting may also uncover site-specific issues early in the process and determine if a development agreement or other actions will be necessary.

STEP TWO: APPLICATION SUBMITTAL AND INTERNAL REVIEW

Once the applicant has filed the [development review application](#), [stormwater permit application](#), and [fees](#), staff will review the submittal for compliance with municipal regulations and covenants and prepare a list of issues and concerns to discuss with the applicant during the Development Review Team (DRT) meeting in step three. This review may take up to **15 business days**, with the caveat that review may take slightly longer if multiple development applications are in the queue. An application is considered complete if it contains all information listed in the Development Review Checklist (see page 8). Note that once submitted, an application becomes public information and general details will be posted on the City's website.

STEP THREE: DEVELOPMENT REVIEW TEAM MEETING

Upon completion of the internal review, the City will host a meeting with the applicant and the Development Review Team. The DRT may include representatives from planning, engineering, utilities, and emergency services. At this meeting, the applicant and the DRT will discuss project details and identify issues and work through possible solutions. It is often most beneficial if the Developer's civil engineer can participate in this meeting. The meeting can be in-person or virtual.

STEP FOUR: DEVELOPMENT REVIEW LETTER AND REVISIONS

City staff will prepare a review letter and provide it to the applicant within **5 business days** after the DRT meeting. This letter will itemize all required and suggested changes to the proposed development as discussed during the DRT meeting. The applicant shall revise plans and provide a narrative description of how each item in the letter was addressed. In addition, all other changes should be listed in the narrative and/or depicted on plans to ensure City staff is apprised of all changes to the development project.

STEP FIVE: FINAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Upon return of revisions, City staff will again review the application to ensure the issues identified in the development review letter have been adequately addressed. This review may take up to **10 business days**

from time revisions are submitted. Once staff determines all issues have been satisfactorily addressed and the proposed development meets all requirements in the municipal code, staff will issue an approval letter to the applicant. Note that no building permits will be issued without final development approval. Additionally, special uses may require further approval and processes with the Plan Commission and City Council (see page 14). Development approval is good for three (3) years from the date of the approval letter.

Next Steps

STEP SIX: PRECONSTRUCTION MEETING (FOR PROJECTS REQUIRING A DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT)

Prior to issuance of a building permit and before site work begins, a preconstruction meeting may be necessary. If the project requires this, a City construction project manager will work with you for the duration of the project. Before scheduling a preconstruction meeting the following items will need to be submitted, approved, or verified:

- Approved, Stamped Construction Drawings
- Letter of Credit calculations for the public infrastructure (to be approved by the City Engineer)
- Signed Letter of Credit from lending institute
- Contractor's certificate of liability insurance, meeting minimum requirements
- Applicable contractor's license
- Stormwater permit and signed Long Term Stormwater Maintenance Agreement (if applicable)

To schedule a pre-construction meeting, please contact staff at least 1 week prior to proposed date. During this meeting, you along with your contractors and our staff will discuss the framework and schedule of the project, along with any requirements set forth by the City standards and specifications, and/or applicable codes.

STEP SEVEN: BUILDING PERMIT

Once the applicant has secured a development approval letter, then they may apply for a building permit. For commercial and industrial developments, the City requires the applicant to submit one original stamped set of the *state-approved* building, HVAC, plumbing, and fire suppression plans prior to issuance of a city building permit. All contractors must be licensed with the State of Wisconsin. On occasion, applicants, or their representatives request permission to start work prior to full development approval. The following activities may be permitted **ONLY** if the required plans and approvals are first obtained by the applicant, and then they may **ONLY** proceed at their own risk.

- Grading/excavation—requires a Wisconsin DNR land-disturbing permit and approval by the City Engineer.
- Installation of water/sewer laterals—requires an exterior plumbing plan approved by the State of Wisconsin or a 'permission to start' letter for plumbing from the State.
- Footing and foundation—requires a building plan approved by the State of Wisconsin or a 'permission to start' letter from the State.
- Interior plumbing—requires a plumbing plan approved by the State of Wisconsin or a 'permission to start' letter from the State.

- Commercial electrical permits must be obtained through the State of Wisconsin. All plans must be reviewed and approved by state.
- Building and HVAC—requires a building plan approved by the State of Wisconsin.
- Fire Alarm—requires a fire alarm plan approved by the State of Wisconsin.
- Fire suppression—requires a fire suppression plan approved by the State of Wisconsin.

STEP EIGHT: CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

Upon building completion, the applicant may request a final inspection and a certificate of occupancy. The following is required before a certificate of occupancy may be issued:

- The architect or engineer of record must file compliance statements with the State of Wisconsin for the following: building, HVAC, fire alarm, and fire suppression.
- Fire alarm and fire suppression systems must be tested and witnessed by the local fire department.
- Test and balancing of the HVAC system must be completed and all reports must be filed with the City.
- A signed long term stormwater maintenance agreement has been submitted to the City to be recorded with the County (if applicable).

STEP NINE: PROJECT COMPLETION AND CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

The final approval for a project is a certificate of completion. Following project completion, the engineer, developer, or contractor shall initiate the certificate of completion by notifying the city planner. The notification must be made in writing (email is preferred). As landscaping installation is reviewed in this step, a certificate of completion may be granted several months after the certificate of occupancy has been provided, depending on the season.

- Staff will conduct a final inspection, prepare a punch list of the deficiencies, and send it to the design engineer, the developer, or contractor.
- Final inspections are only scheduled between April 1 and November 15 of each year.
- All improvements should be in an approvable state (i.e. constructed per approved plan) when the final inspection is requested.
- After receiving a punch list, the noted deficiencies shall be remedied to meet the city's requirements.
- When project has been determined to be completed per approved plan, staff will issue a certificate of completion.

Development Review Checklist

Provide digital plans of each of the following items.

Narrative Statement including:

A description and table(s) of the development including, at a minimum, the following:

- Number of employees.
- Operational information.
- Building schedule/construction phasing.
- Total building area including the number of stories, number of dwelling units, and approximate retail sales floor area.
- Rental v. owner-occupied and rates of rent or sales.
- Traffic implications.
- Estimate of project value, including all site improvement costs.

Cover Sheet indicating:

- Name of the development, name(s) and address of the owner, engineer, land surveyor and/or land planner.
- Date, graphic scale, and north arrow.
- Vicinity map depicting the proposed development in relation to surrounding area.

Existing Conditions Map including the area within 300 feet depicting the following information:

- Existing topography at two (2) foot intervals.
- Lot area, property boundaries, and easements.
- Existing buildings (including overhangs) and any foundations and their dimensions.
- Streams, lakes, wetlands, floodplains, hydric soils, woods, slopes 20% and greater, and any other significant environmental features.
- Private and public facilities, such as streets, driveways, parking areas, utilities, parks, etc.
- Existing small utilities (i.e. phone, cable, gas).

Demolition Plan depicting any demolition to occur on the site (if applicable).

Site Plan depicting proposed:

- Lot dimensions, including building setbacks.
- Building layout plan with size and dimensions including location, height, all accessory structures including patios and decks.
- Exterior mechanical equipment.
- Easements for access, utilities, stormwater conveyance, etc.
- Location and detailed drawings of fences and retaining walls. Walls over 3 feet in height require engineering drawings.
- Curve radii and centerlines of existing and proposed access points, streets, and other rights-of-way with dimensions.
- Acceleration, deceleration and passing lanes with dimensions (if applicable).
- Sidewalks or pathways within the site and in the right-of-way with dimensions.
- Dimensions (including angles) of existing and proposed parking stalls, drive aisles, landscape islands, and loading zones.
- Refuse and recyclable collection areas.
- Location of fire hydrants and fire lanes.
- Site summary including site area, building area coverage, total parking spaces, pervious and impervious surface square footage.

Utility Plans depicting:

- Utility easements.
- Existing/proposed public and private water and sanitary sewer mains, services, and hydrants. (Utility under hard surfaces will be required in conduit).
- Existing and proposed above and below ground gas, electric, and telephone lines.
- Transformers and utility boxes, including locations and service requirements.
- Fire flow requirements.

Architectural Plans depicting:

- Interior plumbing details. Include domestic water meter size (see impact fees).
- Mechanical room details.
- Eave measurements (2' required for multifamily projects)

Grading, Drainage, and Erosion Control Plan depicting:

- Existing and final topographic contours.
- Slopes 20% and greater and any other significant environmental features.
- Location of existing drainage courses, floodplains, streams, wetlands, hydric soils, and other water bodies.
- Site grading, proposed drainage patterns, and other stormwater management measures.
- Method of proposed drainage (detention/and retention ponds, catch basins, culverts, etc.) including grading, side slopes, depth, high water elevation, emergency overflow locations, and outfalls.
- Underground storm sewers and drains, including location and size.
- Lowest building opening elevation at which water would enter the building if the building were surrounded by water. The elevation may correspond to:
 - The lowest walkout level.
 - The lowest wall at a window well-formed by foundation walls.
 - The lowest window opening not protected by a foundation window well.
- Elevation of all property corners and ground elevation at front and rear of the building.
- Elevation at top and bottom of proposed retaining walls and loading docks.
- Proposed temporary and permanent erosion control best management practices.
- City shoreland zoning setbacks (shoreland GIS layer can be provided by the City upon request).

Storm Water Plan specifying:

- Computations showing no increase in volume of stormwater discharge for 1.5" rain event, and no increase in rate of stormwater discharge for 2, 10, and 100-year rain events.
- Computations showing compliance with ordinance for total suspended solids (TSS) and showing total phosphorus (TP) removal results.

Signage Plan depicting:

- Location, type, color, material, and dimensions of all temporary and permanent entrance features or other signs on buildings or on the site.
- If no sign plan is provided during development review, the applicant will be required to file a sign permit application and fee at the time a sign is desired.

Lighting Plan specifying:

- Location, size, height, and shielding for all lighting fixtures proposed for the site.
- Detailed information on each light fixture including a copy of the manufacturer's catalog information sheet.
- Hours of illumination and degree to which the proposed exterior night lighting will affect adjacent properties.

Landscaping Plan specifying:

- Location, species, and size of all existing trees on the site including identification of what is to be removed and what is to be preserved.
- Location, species, and installation size of all proposed shrubs, trees, and other live plant material.
- Location, size, height, and construction materials for all fences, walls, berms, or other landscape screening device.
- Buffers to adjacent property, if any.

Color Elevations depicting:

- Color building elevations for all sides, including details on all exterior building materials.

Applicable Ordinance Sections and Covenants

The City's Municipal Code is available online at www.municode.com or by clicking [here](#). When completing development review, City staff ensures the submitted plans are in compliance with the requirements of Chapters 12 and 17. The following quick reference is intended to point the applicant and their consultants to the most referenced code sections used to prepare development plans. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive; fire and building codes will also be taken into consideration during review. If the applicant or their consultant team has any questions regarding the requirements of these or other sections of the Municipal Code, please don't hesitate to contact the Community Development Department at 715-425-0900.

- Zoning District Standards
 - Standard Districts (17.12 to 17.64)
 - Downtown Overlay District (17.68)
 - Groundwater Protection Overlay District (17.70)
 - Floodplain Protection Regulations (17.120)
 - Shoreland-Wetland Protection Regulations (17.124)
- General Requirements
 - Lot and Building Regulations (17.08.010)
 - Driveway Regulations (17.08.020)
 - Fences and Obstructions (17.08.030)
 - Setback Requirements (17.08.050)
 - Nonconforming Building and Uses (17.08.060)
- Parking Requirements
 - Parking and Loading (17.08.040)
 - Parking Spaces and Parking Facilities (17.80)
- Multi-Family Design Standards (17.73)
- Planned Unit Development (17.72)
- Traditional Neighborhood Design (17.112)
- Signs Requirements
 - Signs (17.84)
 - Signs within the Downtown Overlay District (17.68.100(C))
- Stormwater Management (12.16)
- Industrial Park Covenants and Design Guidelines
 - [River Falls Industrial Park](#)
 - [Sterling Ponds Corporate Park](#)
 - [Whitetail Ridge Corporate Park](#)

Note that projects located in the Downtown Overlay District require **Downtown Design Review Committee** approval and projects in the Whitetail Ridge and Sterling Ponds Corporate Parks are reviewed by an **Architectural Review Committee (ARC)**.

Helpful Tips

Applicants can help manage their design costs and often speed up review by following these helpful tips:

1. **Talk or meet with Community Development before applying.** Before you make significant investments in your project, our Community Development staff can help you understand the feasibility of your project, what City plans and ordinances will apply, the type of review process there will be, and how to prepare a complete application. This pre-application meeting is included in our development review process and is the best way to ensure unnecessary hurdles are avoided later in the review process. Conceptual review of preliminary plans almost always saves time, money, stress, and frustration in the long run for everyone involved.
2. **Submit a complete and thorough application.** One of the most important things you can do to make your review process less costly is to submit a complete, thorough, and well-organized application in accordance with ordinance requirements. Our development review checklist and list of applicable ordinance sections are included in this packet to help you make sure your application is complete.
3. **Hire an experienced professional to prepare your plans.** Professional engineers, land planners, architects, surveyors, and landscape architects should be familiar with standard development review processes and expectations. They are also generally capable of preparing high-quality plans that will ultimately require less time for staff review, saving you time and money in the long run. Any project that includes site grading, stormwater management, utility work, significant landscaping, or building remodeling or expansion generally requires professionals. For less complicated projects, it is acceptable to prepare plans yourself rather than paying to have them prepared by a professional. However, keep in mind that even though the project may be less complex, the staff needs to ensure that your proposal meets all ordinance requirements.
4. **Keep lines of communication open.** We're here to help guide you through the development review process. Keep contact with the Community Development Department staff as often as needed to ask questions or receive project updates.
5. **Provide timely plan revisions.** Within 15 business days of plan submittal, City staff will provide a review letter outlining issues to be addressed in the draft plans. To ensure the review process proceeds on schedule, work with staff to address comments and submit revisions in a timely manner.
6. **Optional – hold a neighborhood meeting for larger and potentially more controversial projects.** For these types of projects, one way to help the formal review process go more smoothly is to host a meeting for the neighbors. This usually should happen before you even submit a formal development review application. A neighborhood meeting will give you an opportunity to describe your proposal, respond to questions, and address issues in an environment that is less formal and potentially less emotional than a Plan Commission meeting. Please notify the Community Development Department of your neighborhood meeting date, time, and place; make sure all neighbors are fully aware and document the outcomes of the meeting to include with your application.

Development Fees

The City's fee schedule is amended annually and is available on the City's website [here](#). Depending on the size and scope of the project, typical fees include the following. Please check with City staff to confirm fees for your site/project.

Planning and Engineering Fees

- Development Review Fee – \$1,775
- Storm Water Management Permit – \$1,000 + \$100 per acre (1-10 acres)
- Storm Water Financial Guarantee – \$5,000 (0-5 acres); \$10,000 (5+ acres)
- Right-of-way Excavation [Permit](#) - (if necessary) – \$130 and requires a minimum \$1,000 corporate surety

Impact Fees

- Park Facilities Impact Fee – see fee schedule
- Library Facilities Impact Fee – see fee schedule
- Fire Facilities Impact Fee – see fee schedule

Parkland Dedication

- [Parkland dedication](#) – see fee schedule

Utility Connection Fees

- Sewer Connection Fee – see fee schedule
- Water Impact Fee – see fee schedule
- Irrigation Meter Fee – see fee schedule

Building Fees

- Demolition Permit Fee – \$135
- Building Permit Fee – see fee schedule
- Plumbing Permit Fee – (included in building permit fee)
- Electric Permit Fee – (included in building permit fee)

Services and Assistance Available

The City offers the following services to assist in the development process.

PROVISION OF DATA

The City has a robust database of geographic information system information and other applicable information. Upon request, staff can compile data pertinent to your site, including easements, utilities, soils, etc. For more information, please contact Emily Shively at eshively@rfcity.org or 715-426-3437. Note that while we do retain site data, we may not have access to or have complete knowledge of all details of a site.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

The City seeks to actively encourage and promote the retention, expansion, and attraction of businesses and to develop and redevelop properties in our community for industrial or mixed-use projects. The City has successfully utilized tax increment financing to advance key projects where the project costs provide public benefit and further the general welfare of the residents and taxpayers of the City. Projects proposed in an existing Tax Increment District (TID) should, at a minimum, have an estimated assessed value of \$2 million to be considered for assistance. Proposed projects that require the creation of a new TID should, at a minimum, have an estimated assessed value of \$4 million to be considered for assistance. Projects with a lessor anticipated increase in assessed value may be considered if they create a substantial new development or advance redevelopment goals of the City. A short summary of the City's policy on tax increment financing is available [here](#) and the full policy can be downloaded [here](#).

WPPI ENERGY NEW CONSTRUCTION DESIGN ASSISTANCE

The New Construction Design Assistance program assists prospective building owners and developers, design professionals and construction contractors in delivering a high-performance building in order to reduce the electric demand and energy use for new construction projects. Through this program, WPPI Energy will provide technical and design assistance as well as financial incentives to improve the energy efficiency of nonresidential new construction projects. An informational sheet and application form for this program is available [here](#).

FOCUS ON ENERGY

The [Focus on Energy program](#) empowers the people and businesses of Wisconsin to make smart energy decisions with enduring economic benefits. Focus on Energy's Commercial & Multifamily Design Assistance Program provides design professionals, builders, developers and building owners with energy-saving options for the design of new buildings and major renovation projects (over 5,000 square feet). Incentives can be used to reduce the upfront cost of high-efficiency measures that exceed Wisconsin's energy code requirements. Furthermore, the Multifamily New Construction program works with property owners and developers to model systems for new apartments and condominium complexes with four or more units. The New Construction program purpose is to identify energy savings opportunities pre-construction by coordinating with developers to make energy-efficient product choices. Prescriptive and custom incentives are available through this program.

Additional Development Review Processes (if applicable)

Each development project may be subject to additional processes or reviews. If additional processes may be required, prepare for an extended timeline to achieve standards for approval and completion. Below is information for each process.

Planned Unit Development (PUD) Process

WHAT IS A PUD?

A planned unit development (PUD) is a special use intended to encourage and promote improved environmental design by allowing for greater freedom, imagination, and flexibility in the development of land, while assuring substantial compliance to the basic intent of the zoning ordinance and the comprehensive plan. Such developments are intended to be enhanced by coordinated area site planning, diversified location of structures and/or mixing of compatible uses; to provide a safe and efficient system for pedestrian and vehicular traffic; to provide attractive recreation and open spaces as integral parts of the developments; to enable economic design in the location of public and private utilities and community facilities; and to ensure adequate standards of construction and planning. PUDs allow for flexibility in use, dimensional requirements, parking, and signage. The flexibility is granted in exchange for a public benefit.

REVIEW PROCESS

STEP ONE: PRE-APPLICATION CONFERENCE

A PUD applicant shall first schedule a pre-application meeting with the Community Development Department to discuss the scope and nature of the proposed development. A preliminary sketch and a narrative description must be submitted in advance of the pre-application conference. If the applicant so chooses, they may request that the concept be reviewed by Plan Commission for conceptual review. There is no fee associated with this process.

STEP TWO: GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (GDP)

To begin the GDP process, the applicant must file an [application](#), GDP submittal [fee](#) and stormwater review [fee](#), and submit a General Development Plan. Planning, engineering and utility staff will review the GDP for compliance with municipal regulations and GDP submittal requirements per [Section 17.72](#) of the Municipal Code. Once review is complete, staff will meet with the applicant to discuss issues and necessary revisions to the GDP. Staff review takes approximately **15 business days**. Following internal review, staff will hold a meeting with the applicant and their project team (i.e.



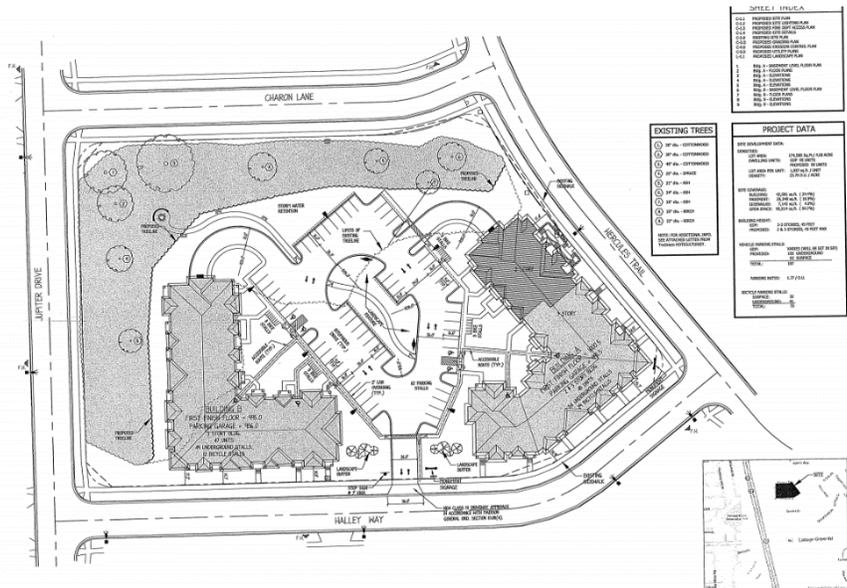
engineer, architect, etc.) to discuss staff’s review comments. The applicant’s team then revises the GDP as requested by staff and it is resubmitted for a second round of review.

Once staff has approved the GDP, the Plan Commission will hold a public hearing on the GDP and make a recommendation to City Council. The City Council will consider the GDP and it may choose to approve, reject, or conditionally approve the proposed PUD. If tentative approval is granted subject to conditions, the applicant must provide notification of acceptance or refusal of the conditions within **45 days** after receiving a copy of the written resolution of the City Council. Refusal of the landowner shall constitute a denial of the GDP by Council. Failure of the applicant to notify the City Council of acceptance or denial of the conditions to the GDP constitutes acceptance of the conditions. Approval of the GDP establishes the basic right of use for the area, but approval is conditional upon conformity as required in the specific implementation plan.

STEP THREE: SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (SIP)

Once the GDP has been approved, the applicant may file a Specific Implementation Plan (SIP). The SIP must be filed within **12 months** of approval of the GDP; if it is not, the applicant must resubmit a GDP and complete the process outlined in Step 2 of this sheet. Similar to the GDP process, the applicant must submit an [application](#), SIP submittal [fee](#), stormwater review [fee](#), and a Specific Implementation Plan, the contents of which shall include those items listed in Section [17.72.060](#) of the Municipal Code as well as the checklist in the [Development Review packet](#).

Again, upon submittal, planning, engineering and utility staff will review the SIP for compliance with municipal regulations and SIP submittal requirements per Section [17.72.060](#) of the Municipal Code. Once review is complete, staff will meet with the applicant to discuss issues and necessary revisions to the SIP. Staff review takes approximately **15 business days**. Following internal review, staff will hold a meeting with the applicant and their project team (i.e. engineer, architect, etc.) to discuss staff’s review comments. The applicant’s team then revises the SIP as requested by staff and it is resubmitted for a second round of review. This process sometimes takes multiple iterations before it can be approved by staff. Once approved, the SIP is reviewed by the Plan Commission, which makes a recommendation to City Council. City Council then reviews the SIP at a regular meeting at which point it may approve, reject, or conditionally approve the SIP. Once the SIP has been approved by staff and City Council, the applicant may apply for a building permit.



Annexations

Identify a Developer Partner If desired, the City will partner with the property owner to prepare and issue an RFP to seek a qualified developer that has an interest, skills, and performance record to fulfill the City's vision for this property. This RFP can be prepared by the City at no cost to the property owner and will be posted on the City's website and distributed to a list of potential developers. The City will disseminate the proposals to a review team of the property owner(s) and City staff. Once a developer has been selected, a concept plan will be required that demonstrates topography, the approximate location of roads, number of dwellings by unit type, commercial areas by acreage, parks and open space, and public facilities. Staff will work with the developer to refine the concept.

Once a concept plan has been agreed upon by the property owner, developer, and staff, the property owner may petition the City to annex the land. When considering whether to annex land into the City, the City Council considers the following:

1. Is the location contiguous to the City?
2. Is the proposed use compatible with adjacent uses?
3. What are the capital costs of the proposed development?
4. How will the City's annual budget be impacted by the annexation?

Annexation Process

Landowners and residents initiate most annexations. Direct annexation by unanimous approval is the most common annexation method in Wisconsin. Such annexations require all owners and electors within the territory to be annexed to sign a petition requesting annexation to the city.

This process occurs as follows. See also [Title 19](#) of the Municipal Code.

- **Petition.** Property owner files a petition with the City that includes the following items. Staff then files the petition on behalf of the applicant to the township clerk and the Wisconsin Department of Administration.
 - a. Annexation petition must be signed by all owners and electors residing in the territory to be annexed. (A sample can be provided upon request).
 - b. A scale map of the property to be annexed prepared by a registered surveyor.
 - c. Legal description of the property meeting statutory requirements (§66.0217, Wis. Stats.) that is prepared by a registered surveyor.
 - d. Annexation review fee per the adopted City of River Falls fee schedule.
- **Capital Cost Study.** A study is prepared by the City Engineer to determine the estimated cost of capital improvements to serve the annexation area based on the conceptual plan. Such costs include, water and sanitary sewer mains, stormwater facilities, street infrastructure, parks, fire stations or equipment and any other capital costs related to serving the area.
- **Budget Study.** A budget study is prepared by the Finance Director that determines the estimated annual costs to provide municipal services to the territory proposed for annexation. This study also considers annual revenue including taxes.
- **Annexation Agreement.** The City prepares an annexation agreement based on the proposed development concept, capital cost study, and budget study. The agreement sets out the terms and conditions under which the City Council will consider the approval of an annexation ordinance, sets forth the obligations of the property owner, City, and developer.
- **Rezoning.** The City initiates a rezoning process to assign a city zoning classification to the land to be annexed.
 - a. Notification letters are mailed to property owners within 300' of annexation area.
 - b. A rezoning sign posted on the property.

- c. Plan Commission review of proposed rezoning and makes a recommendation to City Council.
 - d. City Council considers the rezoning ordinance at the time it considers the annexation ordinance.
- **Annexation Ordinance.** The annexation ordinance is considered at two consecutive meetings of the City Council; it is acted on by Council at the second meeting. A two-thirds vote of the City Council is required to adopt the ordinance. Adoption of an annexation ordinance puts the annexation into effect.

Platting

Certified Survey Map (CSM)

Per Section [§236.34, Wis. Stats.](#), and River Falls Municipal Code [§16.04](#), CSM's are required when a minor subdivision of land is requested. The CSM is reviewed and approved by the Community Development Director. It must be prepared by a registered land surveyor in accord with all the requirements of the development codes listed. Subject to the limitations on the availability of a certified survey map for use in the division of land, it may be used in lieu of a final plat if it meets with all requirements.

Preliminary Plat

Once the land has been annexed, the developer may move forward with the platting process. A plat is required any time a landowner wishes to divide land for a residential housing development. In River Falls, a preliminary plat is required and must be submitted per the requirements of [§16.08.030](#), Municipal Code as well as a review fee per the adopted fee schedule². Preliminary plats are reviewed and approved by resolution of the Plan Commission.

Engineering Plans and Technical Specifications

Once a preliminary plat has been approved, the subdivider must submit and receive staff approval of detailed engineering plans and technical specifications for the proposed subdivision. The City's required subdivision design standards are listed in [§16.12](#) and [§16.16](#) of the Municipal Code and in River Falls Municipal Utilities' (RFMU) [Engineering Standards](#). Once the plans and technical specs have been approved by the City Engineer and Utility Director, the subdivider may begin construction of public improvements, although staff recommends first securing City Council approval of the final plat.

Final Plat

The final plat must be submitted with the review fee within 24 months of preliminary plat approval, [§16.08.030.C.](#), Municipal Code. The final plat shall conform to the preliminary plat and to the requirements of all applicable ordinances and state laws and shall be submitted for certification of those agencies having the authority to object to the plat as provided by [§236.12, Wis. Stats.](#) The Plan Commission reviews the final plat at a regular meeting and makes a recommendation to City Council for action. Approved final plats shall be recorded in accordance with the statutory requirements prior to the time that lots are offered for sale.

Parkland Dedications

Per [§16.20](#), Municipal Code, whenever a development is platted, the developer is required to dedicate land for parks, playgrounds, and other open space purposes. The dedication must be equal to 10% gross area of all property within the plat and must be reviewed and approved by

the Park and Recreation Board. If it is determined that a land dedication is not in the public interest, the developer will be required to pay a dedication fee in lieu of land dedication. Dedication fees are established through periodic fee needs assessments as implemented from time to time upon resolutions adopted by the Common Council.

Construction

Pre-Construction

Prior to the start of site construction, the developer facilitates a pre-construction conference with the Construction Inspector, General Contractor, City Engineer, and Building Inspector to discuss the framework of the project, along with any requirements set forth by the City standards and specifications, and/or applicable codes. Before scheduling a preconstruction meeting the following items will need to be submitted, approved, or verified:

1. Approved, stamped construction drawings
2. Letter of credit or bond calculations from Engineering Department
3. Contractor's certificate of liability insurance
4. Applicable contractor's license
5. Stormwater permit, if needed
6. Excavation permit, if needed
7. Grading Permit, if needed

Construction

Upon approval of the preliminary plat, the developer may commence construction of public improvements (i.e. water, sewer, electric, streets, sidewalks, streetlights, etc.). During construction, the City shall have the right to inspect the construction to ensure compliance with plans and specifications, engineering, and construction practices, and all the requirements of law and ordinance.

Final Acceptance of Public Improvements

The Developer's inspector shall notify the City when the public infrastructure is complete. City staff will inspect the site within 15 business days. If the site is acceptable, a recommendation will be made to the Common Council that, public improvements should be accepted. Upon formal final acceptance by the Common Council, an 18-month warranty period begins on the public improvements.

After completion of the public improvements, the developer's engineer submits a complete set of record as built drawings. These plans shall show actual surveyed locations and elevations of key features of the storm water facility, such as pipe size, material and invert elevations, berms, spillways, pond elevations (bottom, safety shelf, high water level, and overflow), emergency overflow elevations, and any other items deemed necessary by the City to determine compliance.

Building Permits

Building permits may be issued once the final plat has been approved and recorded, sewer and water infrastructure has passed all required testing, roadways have been constructed through aggregate base course with curb and gutter, and rough grading has been completed per approved plans. Each building permit application shall be accompanied by the appropriate fees including building permit fee, impact fees, and capital costs per the annexation agreement.