

City of Tracy



Build Inside the Triangle™

Commercial Permits

A Guide to Opening a Business

- **Development Review Process**
- **Conditional Use Permit**
- **Building Permit Process**





GUIDE TO OPENING A BUSINESS IN THE CITY OF TRACY

Congratulations on your decision to open a business in the City of Tracy. The City of Tracy welcomes you to our business community! In order to assist you with the expansion of your existing business or the establishment of your new business, the City of Tracy's Permit Assistance Center has produced this guide.

City Planner

There are two people that will make your way successful. First, there is a City Planner that will work with you through your project. A City Planner is assigned to every project. This City Planner is responsible for making sure that you have a clear understanding of how to meet City requirements in order to obtain approval. Typically, a City Planner will guide you through your conceptual business plan to permit application.

The other person who will greatly assist you is the Central Point of Contact.

Central Point of Contact

Although some required permits for businesses involve more than one City division, the CPC, as your skilled liaison, is here to help. As your City of Tracy primary contact, the Central Point of Contact will assist you through the completion of your project, from the permit application to the Certificate of Occupancy. The Central Point of Contact can be found at the Development & Engineering Services Permit Assistance Center on the first floor of City Hall.

The permits required will depend on the type of business you are starting. Your Central Point of Contact will gladly answer your questions or direct you to the appropriate staff member to assist you.

Most businesses only need a City of Tracy Business License Tax Certificate and zoning approval to start operating in the City of Tracy. However, when alterations or improvements to an existing space are proposed, a Tenant Improvement Building Permit and plan submittal is required. A Tenant Improvement Building Permit requires the approval from various divisions prior to permit issuance. The Permit Assistance Center can help guide you with specific construction and building code requirements for your business as well as a list of other agencies that may need to review and approve your business as part of the permit issuance and construction process.

On occasion, projects are required to go through Development Review or Conditional Use Permit Approval prior to the Building Permit Process.

A. Development Review Process

Development Review is a discretionary review of the design of a project, including the site plan, landscape plan, building elevations, grading plan, and utility plan. The purpose of Development Review is to ensure that a project is compatible with the surrounding environment and consistent with the City's goals and policies. New buildings (commercial, industrial, and residential of three units or greater) and substantial modifications to the exterior of existing buildings require Development Review. Questions related to Development Review requirements can be answered by a planner in the City's Development and Engineering Services Department.

STEP 1 - SUBMIT APPLICATION

Development application forms, general submittal requirements, and the fee schedule are available on the City's website (www.ci.tracy.ca.us) and at the front counter of the Development and Engineering Services Department. A City planner will be delighted to assist you through the process. Just ask!

STEP 2 - CITY REVIEW

City review includes routing application materials to multiple City departments and other agencies for comments. The comments are compiled into a comprehensive letter to the applicant, which details incomplete items, applicable requirements and staff recommendations. Once the application is deemed complete and all requirements are met, City staff will prepare the project for public hearing (step 4).

STEP 3 - APPLICANT RESPONSE

Some projects require additional information or clarification by the applicant and/or revisions to the plans. This step is the applicant's response to those requirements. The applicant's response will be reviewed by the City and steps 2 and 3 may be repeated if necessary.

STEP 4 – PUBLIC HEARING

Public hearings before the Development and Engineering Services Director are required for all Development Review applications. Director-level hearings are scheduled on an as-needed basis. A public notice of the hearing will be sent to all property owners within 300 feet of the subject property and posted in a local newspaper.

Would you like more help? Does the process seem confusing or daunting? Would you like to have a requirement clarified? Perhaps the Development Review Team Meeting is for you!

Besides assistance about zoning and permitting, the planning division coordinates the **Development Review Team Meeting (DRT)**. The intent of these intra-departmental meetings is to share upcoming regulations that may affect permitting or processing, and to discuss individual projects, if necessary, to make sure that they are on track for approval. Issues such as additional engineering analysis, more in-depth environmental review, or revised submittals are discussed in these meetings. Any “news” from these meetings is conveyed to the applicants via their Single Point of Contact. You are welcome to attend these meetings at no cost to you, even if is to elicit feedback prior to your initial submittal. If a business has a concern or suggestion relative to the development review process (entitlements, zoning review, development plans, plan check, building permits, etc.) or is considering a major project, then an appointment with DRT can be arranged by calling the Planning Division. This intra-departmental team can provide preliminary comments and provide information on the internal review process for major new project proponents. The Development Review Team meetings take place every second and fourth Monday at 10:30am at the Development & Engineering Services Department – Permit Assistance Center located on the first floor of City Hall.

B. Conditional Use Permit

What is a Conditional Use Permit?

Every parcel within the City of Tracy is located within a specific zone district. Each zone district includes a list of permitted uses and conditionally permitted uses. A Conditional Use Permit is a discretionary approval for a specific land use that may or may not be appropriate for a given location. Questions related to zoning and Conditional Use Permit requirements can be answered by a planner in the City’s Development and Engineering Services Department.

STEP 1 – SUBMIT APPLICATION

Development application forms, general submittal requirements, and the fee schedule are available on the City’s website (www.ci.tracy.ca.us) and at the front counter of the Development and Engineering Services Department. A City planner will assist you through the process.

STEP 2 – CITY REVIEW

City review includes routing application materials to multiple City departments and other agencies for comments. The comments are compiled into a comprehensive letter to the applicant, which details incomplete items, applicable requirements and staff recommendations. Once the application is deemed complete and all requirements are met, City staff will prepare the project for public hearing (step 4).

STEP 3 – APPLICANT RESPONSE

Some projects require additional information or clarification by the applicant and this step is the applicant's response to those requirements. The applicant's response will be reviewed by the City and steps 2 and 3 may be repeated if necessary.

STEP 4 – PUBLIC HEARING

Public hearings before Planning Commission are required for all Conditional Use Permits per the Tracy Municipal Code. Planning Commission has regularly scheduled meetings, which are typically the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. A public notice of the hearing will be sent to all property owners within 300 feet of the subject property and posted in a local newspaper.

C. Building Permit Process

Whenever a Property Owner or a Business Owner constructs a new building, repairs, renovates, alters (including but not limited to structural, architectural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing systems) or adds additional space to a structure, a building permit is required. This is commonly referred to as a tenant improvement (TI). The purpose of the permit process is to safeguard life, health and property through the implementation of building codes. Architectural plans and drawings showing the proposed work are typically required in order to issue a permit for a tenant improvement.

There are **five basic steps** to successfully complete the construction of your project through the Building & Fire Safety Division.

1. Preparation of plans
2. Plan Submittal
3. Applicant Response
4. Permit Issuance and Construction
5. Final Approvals and Occupancy

STEP 1 – PREPARATION OF PLANS

Hire a design professional experienced with your type of project to draw your plans. Your project can be most successful when it is prepared by a design professional who is experienced in designing projects similar in type, size, and scope to your envisioned project.

In most cases, professionally prepared plans will produce a better project through more efficient design and often result in significant time and cost savings during construction.

- **New Buildings:** Under State law, an architect and/or engineer licensed to practice in California is required to prepare plans and drawings for most new buildings. Plans should include drawings and details that clearly show the building's structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- **Existing buildings:** For alterations, additions, or improvements to existing buildings, an architect and/or engineer may be required to prepare the drawings depending on the size, scope, and complexity of the project.
- **Small projects:** Designers who are familiar with conventional drafting practices and building code requirements, in certain instances, may prepare construction drawings for projects such as simple tenant improvements or small one-story accessory buildings. The Building & Fire Safety Division will make this determination.

Agency clearances: Your Central Point of Contact can help identify other City, County or local agencies that must review and clear your project for construction. It is important to contact agencies early in the process to determine what requirements they may have for your project to avoid additional time delays during the permit process.

- **Potential Outside Agencies Involved in Your Project:**
 - Alcoholic Beverage Control
 - San Joaquin County Environmental Health Services
 - San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
 - Tracy Unified School District/Jefferson School District
- **Preparation of reports and calculations:** The Building & Fire Safety Division along with your architect, engineer, or designer can help determine what types of reports and calculations are necessary for your project. Depending on the type, size, and scope of the project, these may include: soils report, structural, energy, and truss calculations, and other similar documents. These reports are an important part of the design and

approval process to ensure the work is safe and conforms to all code requirements.

Submittal Requirements

1. Complete set of plans including architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical and plumbing drawings
 2. Two copies of all required reports and calculations.
 3. Completed application
 4. Plan Check fees based on the valuation of the project as determined by size and scope of project.
- Commercial Additions - Submit 4 complete sets of plans
 - New Commercial Shell Buildings - Submit 6 complete sets of plans & 1 extra site plan
 - Sign - Submit 3 complete sets of plans
 - Tenant Improvements (TI) - Submit 5 sets of plans & 1 extra floor plan if subdividing existing space/suite.
- **City Divisions likely to be involved in Your Project***
 - Planning
 - Engineering
 - Building & Fire Safety
 - Storm Water

*Please keep in mind the applicant does not need to contact each division. The City of Tracy Central Point of Contact can assist you with your permit's status in the approval process. Also, the progress of any application, plan review or inspection can be viewed on-line at <http://etrakit.ci.tracy.ca.us/etrakit>.

STEP 2 – PLANS SUBMITTAL

Once your plans and calculations are complete, they are now ready to submit to the City for review. This process is commonly referred to as “Plan Check” or “Plan Review” and is intended to: 1. Identify and correct any potential design deficiencies or construction problems before construction begins. 2. Ensures that the design is consistent with acceptable engineering and design practices and meets the minimum safety standards for buildings as established by State and local building codes.

Building Permit application forms, general submittal requirements, and the fee schedule are available on the City's website (www.ci.tracy.ca.us) and at the front counter of the Development and Engineering Services Department Permit Assistance Center. A Central Point of Contact will assist you through the process. The City will route your application materials to various City divisions for review of your project for you.

The initial plan review timeframe is a maximum of 20 business days. Any comments are compiled into a list of corrections to the applicant, which details

incomplete items and applicable requirements. The architect or designer will be notified of such needed corrections to the plans and calculations as a result of the Plan Check process. Once the plan review is deemed complete and approved by Building & Fire Safety staff and other applicable agencies, the Central Point of Contact will prepare your plans for permit issuance.

STEP 3 – APPLICANT RESPONSE

Some projects require plan revisions, additional information or clarification by the applicant and/or designer working for the business owner. This step represents the applicant's response to those requested corrections. The applicant's response will be reviewed by the City within 10 business days. Steps 2 and 3 may be repeated if necessary. Any subsequent City review of an applicant's response will not take any longer than 10 business days.

NOTE: A **Red Team Meeting** can be scheduled anytime during the permit process if the applicant or City staff feels the need to have a meeting to help move the project forward.

Your Central Point of Contact can be enlisted to coordinate a Red Team Meeting to help the business owner and/or designer to keep the project on track. The Red Team is made up all City department staff who are decision makers that can be quickly assembled in order to develop solutions and to proactively address any concerns the owner and/or designer may have.

STEP 4 – PERMIT ISSUANCE AND CONSTRUCTION

Once plans have been approved by the plan reviewers and appropriate agencies, a building permit can be issued.

Under California law a building permit can only be issued to a licensed contractor or the owner of the property. A permit issued to the property owner is referred to as an "owner/builder" permit. An "owner/builder" disclosure form must be completed by the owner prior to permit issuance.

Permit fees and other associated fees are collected at the time the permit is issued. These fees are generally based on the value of the project.

During construction, it is important to request the necessary building inspections to ensure the work meets all code requirements. These inspections include a review of each phase of construction by a City building inspector to ensure all work conforms to the approved plans, State and local codes, and acceptable standards of construction.

The City does not automatically perform inspections. It is the responsibility of the owner or contractor to request the necessary inspections. Inspections can be requested 24-hours a day by using the inspection request line @ 209-831-6440 or online at <http://etrakit.ci.tracy.ca.us/etrakit>.

STEP 5 – FINAL APPROVALS AND OCCUPANCY

When your project is nearly complete, it is important to contact all agencies that have been involved with your project to request a final inspection. Generally, this would include the City's Planning, Building & Fire Safety, and Engineering Divisions.

Your inspectors will identify any outstanding requirements prior to completion of your project. Make sure all work has been completed and all reports and other paperwork have been submitted to your appropriate inspector prior to requesting any final inspection.

Once construction has been completed, inspected, and approved for occupancy by the building inspector, the City will issue a Certificate of Occupancy for your project. There are exceptions when a Certificate of Occupancy is not issued. However, this is representative of the final step in the construction process and signifies your project is complete and meets provisions of all State and local codes.

City staff will gladly assist you with any questions you might have. At any point during the process please feel free to contact our office at:

Development & Engineering Services
Permit Assistance Center
333 Civic Center Plaza
Tracy, CA 95376
(209) 831-6400

We hope this guide has helped you better understand the City's permitting process. Please accept our congratulations in advance on successfully opening or expanding your business in the City of Tracy.