



Planning Department
CLIENT ASSISTANCE MEMO

Land Use Permits – Tenant Improvement FAQ

When do I need approval from the Planning Department when performing tenant improvements?

You need a land use permit from the planning department when your tenant improvement project involves:

- Exterior changes to the building including new exterior paint; new signs, cornices, siding or awnings; and changes to the location of doors and windows; or
- A change in use or intensity; and/or
- Whenever your proposed improvement triggers review under SEPA (the State Environmental Protection Act).

Why do I need to apply for Land Use Permits?

Exterior Changes

- **Exterior Changes** to the building will trigger both **Design Review** and a **Sign Permit**, even if you are proposing the same use under a different owner (for example, one retail shop to another retail shop).
- The City will review both your design review application and sign permit application concurrent with building permit review for any exterior facade renovation.

Changes in Use or Intensity

- **Changes in Use** include any time you change the use from one use type to another type in the same location (for example, a retail use converted to a restaurant use).
- **Changes in Intensity** occur when you have the same general type of use but the traffic demand or parking needs change (based on the ITE Manual, seating plan, and City Parking Standards, See GHMC 17.72.030).
- Changes in intensity may also occur when the demand for sewer or water changes, based on Equivalent Residential Units (See GHMC 19.10.004).
- Changes in Use and Intensity trigger **Site Plan Review**.

When should I apply for a Land Use Permit?

- We highly recommend you apply for land use permits before you apply for your building permits.

Where Can I find Application Materials for Land Use Permits?

- You can find a list of the application materials you need to bring by project type at:

www.cityofgigharbor.net/planning-checklists-apps-fees.

This webpage contains general application information (fees, application information, environmental checklists, the general permit application form, etc.), project specific checklists, and information about design review.

Client Assistance Memos are not intended to replace the Gig Harbor Municipal Code. Should you have any questions regarding this information please call the Planner of the Day at (253) 851-6170.

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