



COMMERCIAL PERMITTING 101

Houston BuildExpo

2025

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OVERVIEW

Understand the phases of site development and required documents:



Phase 1: Site Development Approval

- Purchase Land
- Platting
- Utility Availability Letter

Phase 2: Plan Review & Permits

- Private Property Plan Review **OR**;
- Right-of-Way (ROW) Plan Review
- Permit Insurance



Phase 3: Construction & Inspections

- Construction & Inspection
- Certificate of Compliance (**must complete Private Property Plan Review**) **OR**;
- Letter of Acceptance (**must complete ROW Plan Review**)

PRIVATE PROPERTY PLAN REVIEW PROCESS BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT

Learn the process and fees for private property plan reviews:

Step 1 Submit Application.

Step 2 Verify Address if Needed.

Step 3 Finalize Application and Pay the Review Fee:
25% of the Building Permit Fee

Step 4 Submit Documents and Drawings.

Step 5 Make Corrections to Plans if Needed.

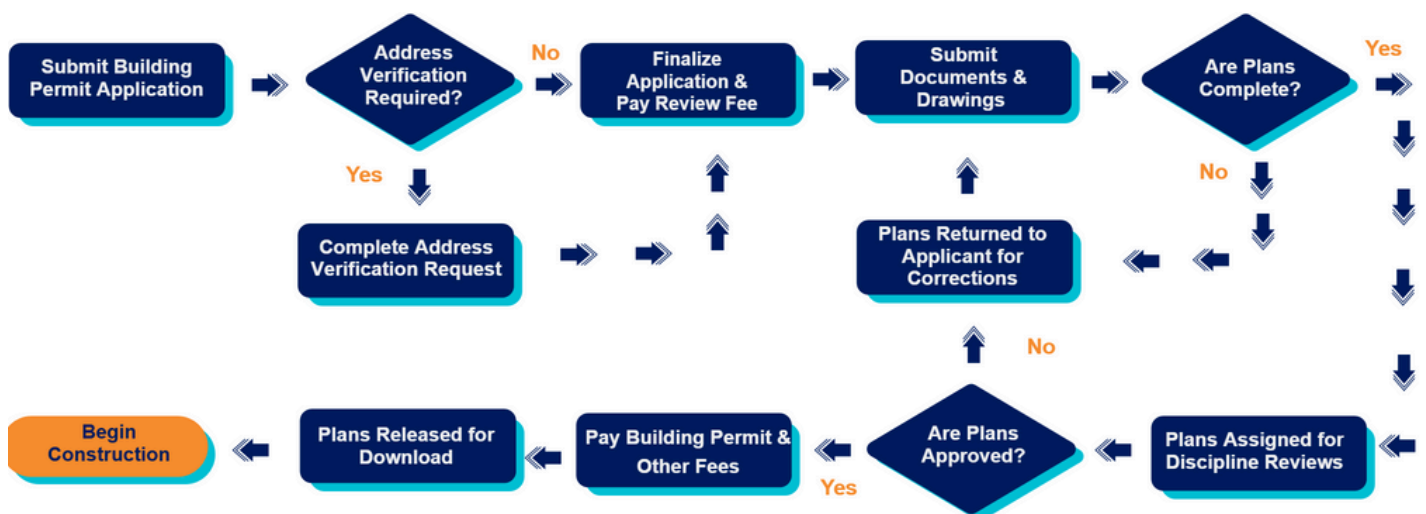
Step 6 Pay Remaining Fees.

Step 7 Download Approved Plans.

PRIVATE PROPERTY PLAN REVIEW PROCESS BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT

Discipline reviews are assigned based on the project's scope of work:

- Fire Alarms
- Fire Sprinklers
- HazMat/High Pile
- Taps & Meters
- Health
- Infrastructure
- Houston Airport System
- Storm Drainage
- Planning
- Urban Forestry
- Traffic
- Flood
- Mechanical
- Electrical
- Plumbing
- Structural



RIGHT-OF-WAY PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

OFFICE OF THE CITY ENGINEER (OCE)

Learn the process and fees for private property plan reviews:

Step 1 Submit Application.

Step 2 Pay Plan Fee Deposit.

Step 3 Upload plan and Profile Drawings.

Step 4 Make Corrections to Plans if Needed.

Step 5 Pay Remaining Fees.

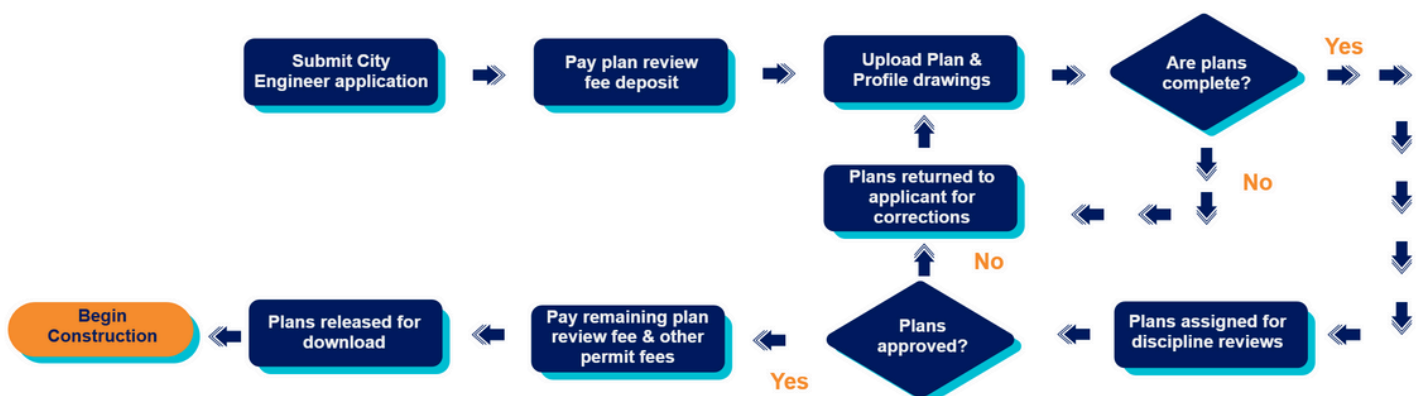
Step 6 Download Approved Plans.

Step 7 Start Construction.

RIGHT-OF-WAY PLAN REVIEW PROCESS OFFICE OF THE CITY ENGINEER (OCE)

Discipline reviews are assigned based on the project's scope of work:

- Stormwater (inside city limits)
- Stormwater (outside city limits)
- Water/Wastewater
- Wastewater Facilities
- Water facilities/JRC
- GIS-Digital Antenna System
- Telecommunication-DAS
- Flood
- Street and Traffic
- Planning
- Urban Forestry
- Houston Water



BEFORE YOU BEGIN CHECKLIST

Identify key steps before starting a project:

Verify Legal Issues:

- Check deed restrictions, property liens, and unpermitted work; File deed restriction with County Clerk's office.
- Check with the Harris County Appraisal District or file an open records request to review permit history; To file a request visit: bit.ly/3GKiN0c
- Verify you meet your Homeowner's Association or Civic Club requirements for development, if applicable.

Check Utility Availability:

- Ensure there is capacity for water and wastewater on the property.

Review Floodplain, Setback, and Platting Requirements:

- For properties in the floodplain, the project cost estimate must be less than 50% of the market value of the structure to be considered a non-substantial improvement.
- Platting may be required if there's a change in property use.
- Check how setbacks affect things like carports.

Confirm Survey and Property Lines

- Ensure that your structure can be built in the proposed location.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN : GEOMAP

Identify if you are Within City Limits

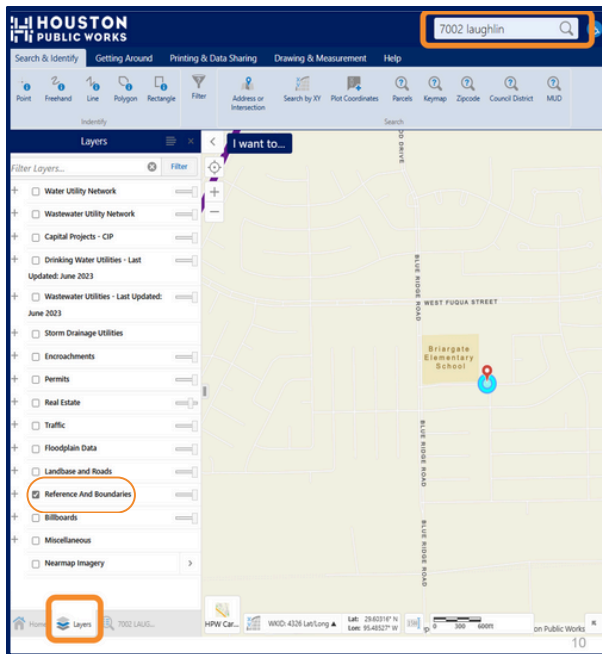
1. Visit: geohub.houstontx.gov



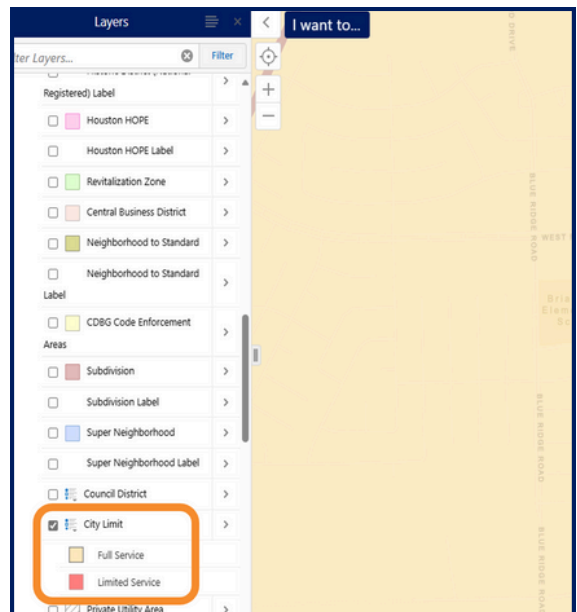
2. Enter a street address, parcel ID, or keymap

3. Click on the **Layers** tab

4. Check the box for **References and Boundaries** and click the **+** sign to expand the options



5. Check the box for **City Limit**



WHO CAN PURCHASE A PERMIT

Know who can buy permits and contractor requirements:



A **building permit** can be purchased by an owner, agent, or contractor.



A **trade permit** must be purchased by a licensed contractor.

LICENSING

Electrical: Master Electrician must be licensed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR)

Mechanical: Air Conditioning (HVAC) Contractor must have a type A or B license from the TDLR

Plumbing: Master Plumber must be licensed by the Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners

WHO CAN PURCHASE A PERMIT

Know who can buy trade permits:



Sidewalk/Driveway: only a bonded contractor with a **\$2,000** surety bond may purchase a permit. Bonds must be submitted to the Permits Office at **Permits_Office@houstontx.gov**



Fire Alarm: Fire alarm contractors must be licensed by the **Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) State Fire Marshal's Office** and be registered with the City of Houston. A copy of the license must be submitted to the Permits Office at **Permits_Office@houstontx.gov**



Fire Sprinkler: Fire sprinkler contractors must be licensed by the **TDI State Fire Marshal's Office** and be registered with the City of Houston. A copy of the license must be submitted to the Permits Office at **Permits_Office@houstontx.gov**

INSPECTIONS AND UTILITY RELEASES

Understand the Inspection and Utility Release Process:

- Licensed contractors can purchase trade permits after the building permit has been sold.
- Once permits are purchased, work may begin
- Plans and permits must remain on the job site for inspections
- Inspections are required at various stages of construction
- Temporary Utilities may be obtained after all permits are purchased. **(A Temporary Cut In/ Temporary Gas Permit must be purchased)**
- All revisions must be approved prior to Final Inspection
- All deferred submittal items must be completed prior to Final Inspection
- After all inspections are complete, request Certificate(s) of Occupancy
- Remodels/Repairs are usually issued a Certificate of Compliance



**Most inspections can be scheduled online at:
bit.ly/4mKkOdp or by calling the
Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system
at 713.222.9922.**

BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT INSPECTIONS CHECKLIST

Understand the Process for scheduling inspections

Structural Inspections



- ❑ **Pier / Foundation** - Schedule before placement of concrete
- ❑ **Windstorm** - Schedule prior to exterior sheathing installation to verify fasteners/straps
- ❑ **Frame** - Schedule after MEP rough-ins and prior to installing insulation and sheetrock
Note: Truss plans should be approved at this time.
- ❑ **Lath/Brick Tie** - Schedule after frame inspection has been approved
- ❑ **Insulation** - Schedule after frame inspection has been approved
- ❑ **Building Final** - Schedule after the entire project has been completed to verify that all life safety and grading items have been installed and are working properly

Plumbing Inspections

- ❑ **Ground, Sewer, Water Service, Storm Drainage, Lawn Sprinklers** - Schedule before pipes are covered
- ❑ **Rough-in** - Schedule before sheetrock is installed
- ❑ **Gas/Final** - Schedule when work is complete

BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT INSPECTIONS CHECKLIST

Understand the Process for scheduling inspections

Electrical Inspections



- ❑ **Ditch Cover** - Schedule when the underground conduit is put in
- ❑ **Ditch Cover** - Schedule when the underground conduit is put in
- ❑ **Rough-in** - Schedule when walls and ceiling are wired
- ❑ **Temporary Cut-In** - Schedule when temporary power is needed to check wiring
- ❑ **Meter Loop Services/Final** - Schedule after all work is completed

Mechanical Inspections

- ❑ **Duct Seal** - Schedule before insulation and sheetrock is installed
- ❑ **Cover** - Schedule before insulation and sheetrock is installed
- ❑ **Grille Seal** - Schedule before insulation and sheetrock is installed
- ❑ **Final** - Schedule after work is complete

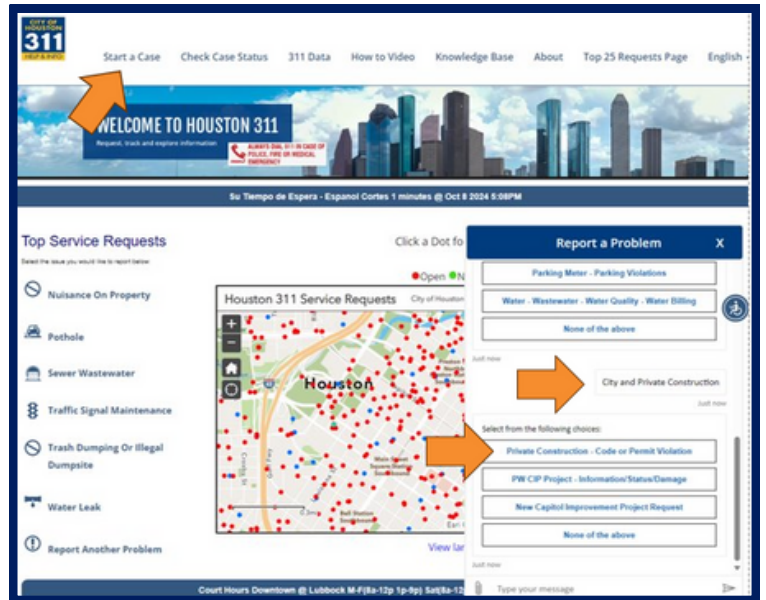
REPORT VIOLATIONS

Understand the process for reporting violations:

Code Violations:

If you suspect work without a permit:

- Call 311 or 713-837-0311
- Visit: www.houstontx.gov/311/
- Email: 311@houstontx.gov
- Use the Houston 311 mobile app



Deed Restriction Violations:

Report to the Legal Department:
bit.ly/4ITWMw7



VISIT THE PERMITTING WEBISTE

*Learn our to navigate the
Houston Permitting Center Website*

Scan the QR Code or Visit:
www.HoustonPermittingCenter.com



Codes 2021 Code Amendments
Documents Guides, Forms, and Other Documents
Fee Calculator Online tool that allows customers to estimate their building permit fees.
Fee Schedule View or download printable versions of Building Code Enforcement's 2024 fee schedules
Project Planner Answer questions about your business or construction project, and the Project Planner will identify the permits you'll need from the City of Houston
Sold Permits Search To obtain information about basic permit history, you can use this search option

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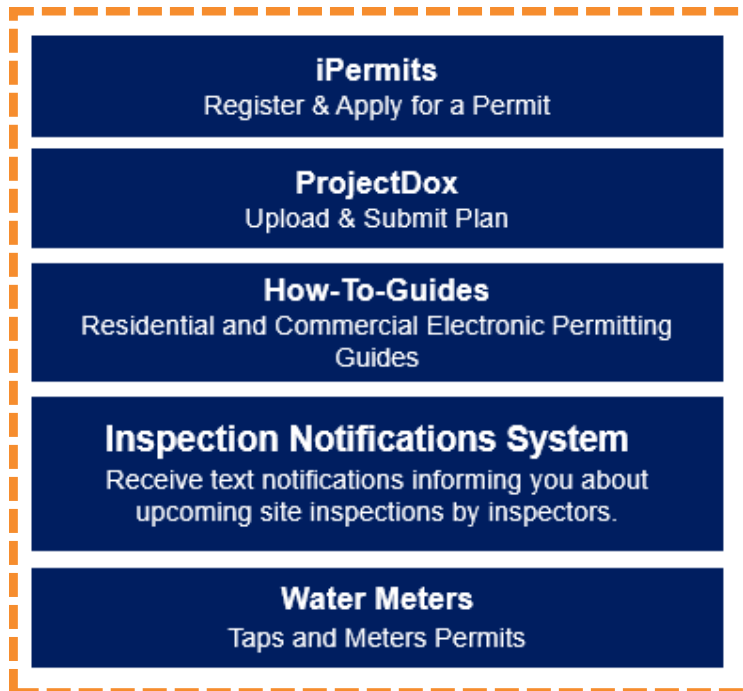


- Appointments**
Customers can conveniently schedule and check-in for appointments and obtain a digital QFlow eTicket for walk-in services for certain groups
- Live Chat**
Available
Monday - Friday: 9:00 AM - 2:30 PM
- Plan Review Contact List**
This list is updated monthly
- Report An IT Issue**
Use this form to report only IT issues you are having with iPermits or ProjectDox

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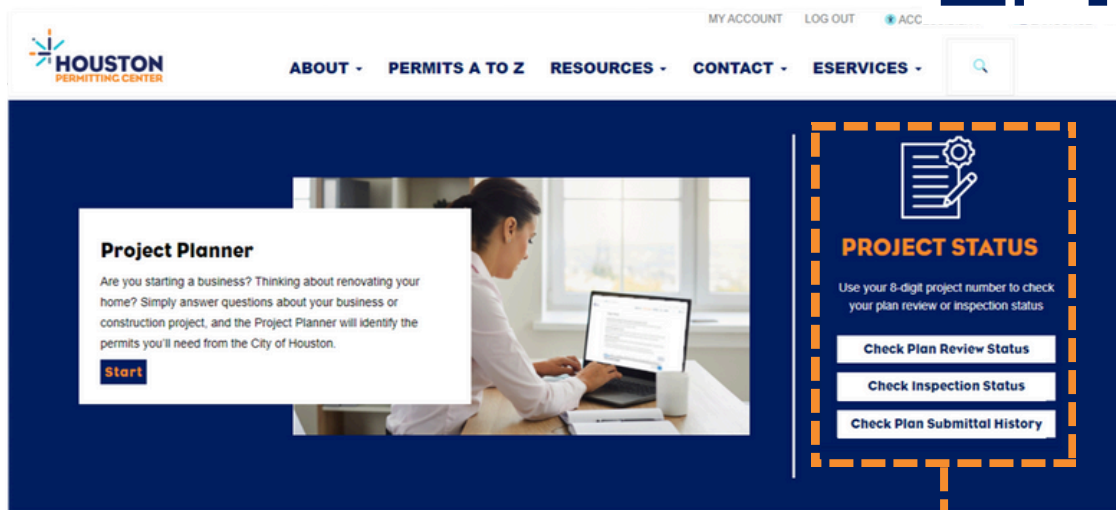
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Check Plan Review Status
Customers can check the status of their plan review and view any correction comments

Check Inspection Status
Customers can schedule inspections and then review the results and comments from those inspections

Check Plan Submittal History
Customers can review the submission history of a project's plans

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Performance Dashboard

Interactive dashboard provides an at-a-glance view of our daily performance, including the total plans in the system for review and the number of business days of the oldest plan.

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Live Chat Available: Monday - Friday | 9:00 AM - 2:30 PM



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