



PLANNING CLEARANCE

Description

Planning Clearance is the County’s review of the site plan for a proposed development, and is the starting point for most of the County’s permitting processes, including single family dwellings, accessory structures, on-site septic systems, commercial proposals, and industrial developments. Projects are reviewed for compliance with required setbacks, zoning, critical areas, and other applicable land use codes.

Planning Clearance is required prior to the submittal of most building and development permit applications.

Review Process

Staff reviews the application for conformance with the applicable state and county codes. If necessary, staff will conduct a site visit to ascertain site conditions or verify the presence or absence of any critical areas identified on County maps. Some of the things that staff will review for include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Critical Areas
- Legal lot determination
- Sufficient access
- Compliance with land use regulations
- Setbacks

Upon initial review completion, a letter will be returned indicating either approval of the submitted site plan, or requesting additional information. The need for critical areas assessments, if required, will be identified in this letter. Please note that all required critical areas assessments must be reviewed and approved prior to completion of the Planning Clearance process. If a site visit was conducted, the site visit fee will need to be paid prior to completion of Planning Clearance.

Review Time

Planning Clearance review times vary based on the project under review and staff availability during your visit. In some cases, it is possible to complete the Planning Clearance process over the counter. For those projects that require review beyond this, a letter either approving the Planning Clearance or requesting additional information will be returned within 14 days.

Fees

The following fees are required to be paid when the application is submitted:

Basic Planning Clearance:	\$180
Planning Clearance Major Revision:	\$135
Planning Clearance Minor Revision;	\$90
- or if platted within last 5 years;	\$90
- or for Grading Permits;	\$90
- or for Hazard Tree Removal:	\$90
Site Visit (if required)	\$200



PLANNING CLEARANCE

Submittal Checklist

The following are required at time of submittal; please use this checklist as a guide. Please note that we cannot accept incomplete applications.

_____ **1. Project Information Form**

- Form completed and signed in ink by the owner or applicant

_____ **2. Parcel Standard Report (EPIC)**

- Can be obtained from Cowlitz County Website: *(For step by step navigation and instruction see below)*

↗ www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/buildplan

↗ Quick Links *(right hand side)*

↗ EPIC *(first option under "Quick Links")*

_____ **3. Complete Description of Project**

_____ **4. Planning Supplemental Questionnaire**

_____ **5. Site Plan**

- See attached Planning Site Plan Requirements Handout

_____ **6. Cross Sections**

- See attached Planning Cross Section Requirements Handout



Project Information Form

Project Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Parcel # _____ Acres _____

Description of Project: **An incomplete project description can lead to delays in processing your application.**

Area of Existing Structure(s) _____ Sq. Ft. Area of New Structure(s) _____ Sq. Ft.

Estimated Market Value of Project (Building Materials, Plus Labor) \$ _____

Has a land use or planning clearance permit been approved for this parcel within the last 5 years?

- Yes, for this project.
 Yes, but for a different project.
 Do you know the permit number? _____
 No
 Unsure

Property Owner _____

Full Mailing Address _____

Daytime Phone Number _____ Email _____

Applicant (If NOT the property owner) _____

Full Mailing Address _____

Daytime Telephone _____ Email _____

Contractor Name _____ License # _____

I hereby certify that I am the owner or duly authorized agent of the owner for the purposes of this application. I further certify that I have read and examined this application and know the same to be true and correct. If any of the information provided on this application is incorrect, the permit or approval may be revoked.

Print Name _____ **Signature** _____ **Date** _____

Cowlitz County Building & Planning Department
207 N 4th Avenue, Kelso, WA 98626
Phone (360) 577-3052 - FAX (360) 414-5550
Monday - Thursday 7:00am - 5:30pm

Initial	Date	Type	Permit #

PLANNING Site Plan Requirements:

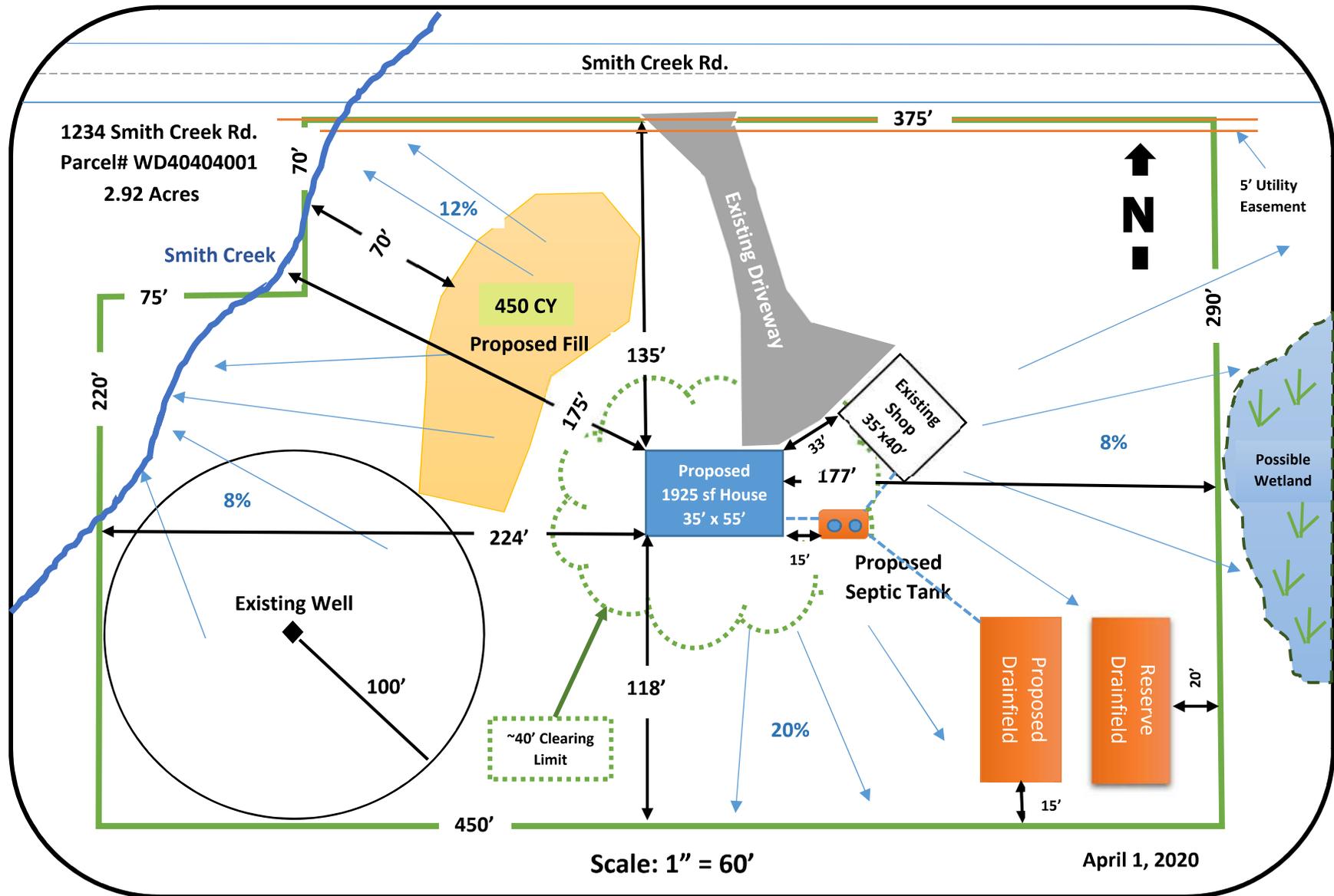
Please use this checklist while drawing your site plan.

- Draw to scale
- Show north arrow
- Show date drawn
- Show address, or parcel number if not yet addressed
- Show all existing parcel lines, lot shape and lot dimensions
- Show centerline of fronting road easement
- Show locations and dimensions of existing and proposed structures
- Show dimensions of clearing limits around structures
- Show location of existing and proposed water wells with wellhead protection area
- Show existing and proposed septic tanks, transfer lines, drainfield and reserve area
- Show distance from all structures to property lines or other structures
- Show proposed driveway/access location
- Show existing easements (road, utility, drainage, septic, etc.)
- Show location of suspected critical areas on or abutting the parcel (streams, floodplain, wetlands, geohazards)
- Show location of any proposed fill or excavation associated with the proposal
- Use arrows to show the direction of downslopes with approximate slope % labeled

Site plan paper sizes accepted: 8.5x11, 8.5x14, and 11x17

See Reverse Side for Example Site Plan 

Example Site Plan

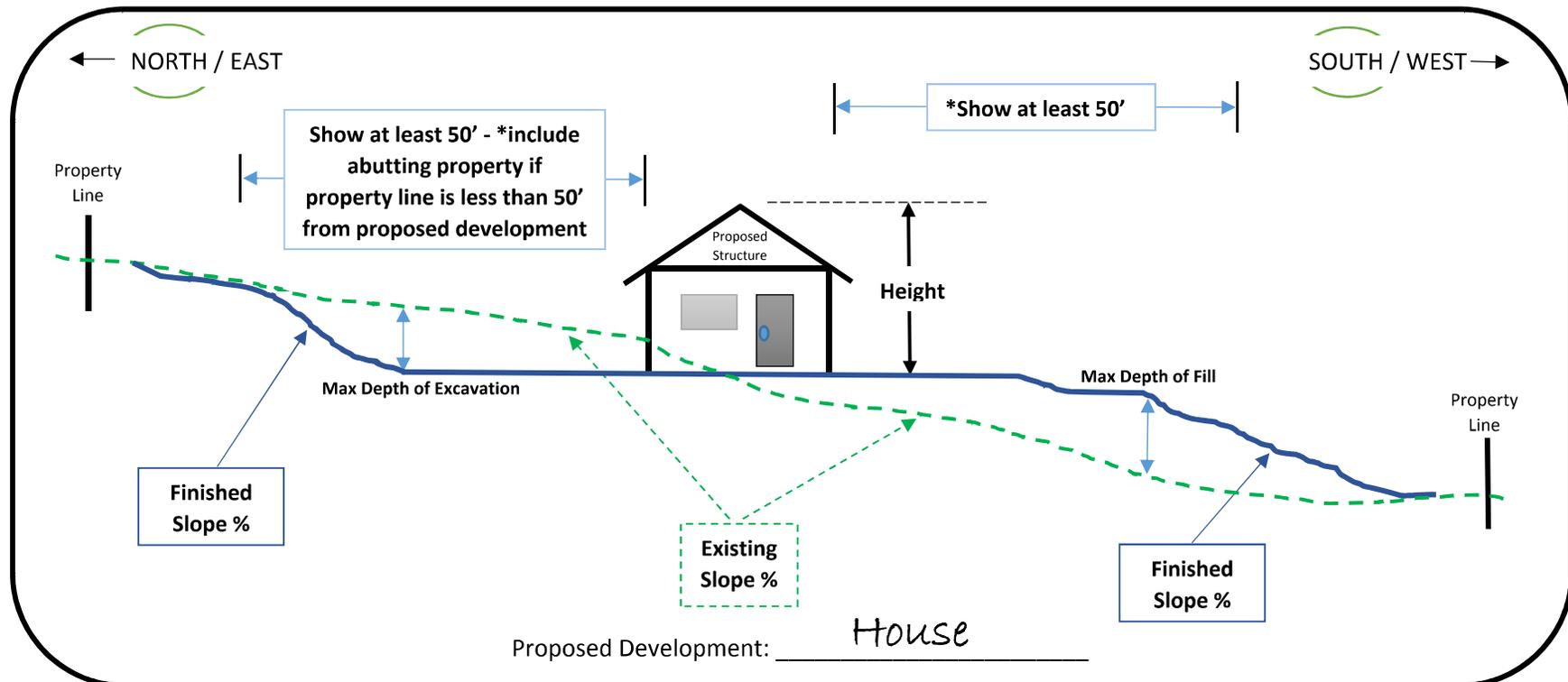


PLANNING Cross-Section Requirements

On separate sheets of paper, using the diagram below as a guideline, please draw a cross-section from North to South and from East to West through all proposed structures and/or excavation and fill areas. This means you should prepare two cross-sections for each proposed building and/or excavation and fill area. The idea is to illustrate the existing conditions on and abutting the parcel, and what will be happening topographically within 50' in all directions of your proposed development(s). Please show:

- All slopes (existing and finished) and label them with % of slope
- Distance from structures and/or excavation and fill areas to slopes
- Distance from structures and/or excavation and fill areas to property lines
- Height of building
- Maximum depth of all excavations
- Maximum depth of all fills

EXAMPLE



For your convenience, drawing panes are provided on the following page

← NORTH

SOUTH →

Proposed Development: _____

← EAST

WEST →

Proposed Development: _____



CALCULATING SLOPE

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The slope of property is used when applying code requirements. It will also help you determine foundation wall heights, fill and grade quantities and other information for your property. Slope is defined in several ways (*degrees, rise/run, and percent*). Accurately determining the slope of your property is key to getting the proper information on any requirements that may or may not apply to your project.

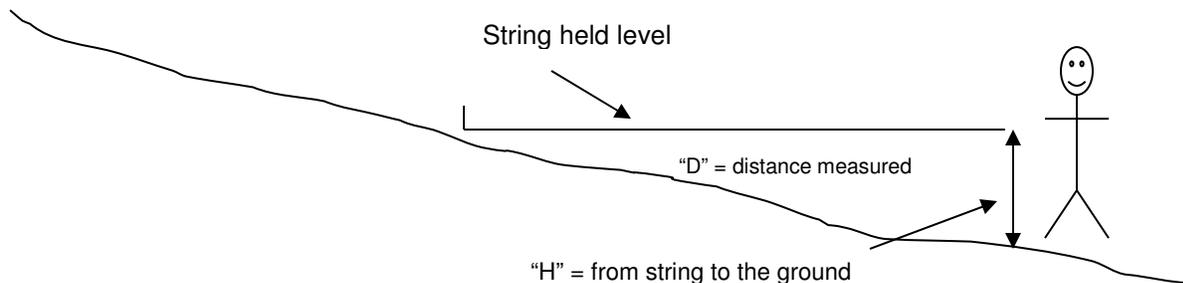
How to calculate the slope on your property.

First gather the items you will need:

- A tape measure: at least 50' if possible.
- Some string, stakes and a hammer.
- A string level
- A helper.

Measuring Slope.

- Find the uphill spot where any development will occur on the property.
- Drive a stake in the ground to mark this spot, and measure down hill, across the slope 50' to 100'.
- Place a second stake at that location.
- Tie the string to the first stake and stretch it to the second stake.
- Have your helper place the string level on the string somewhere near the center.
- You will need to tighten and raise the string until the string is level.
- While holding the string in that position, have your helper measure the distance between the string and the ground at the location of your second stake.



Calculating Slope.

Convert your dimensions (*H and D*) to the same dimension (*inches or feet*).

Calculate the slope using the following formula: $\frac{\text{“H”}}{\text{“D”}} \times 100 = \text{slope in percent.}$

Use the chart on the back of this form to convert your calculated slope into degrees or rise / run.



CALCULATING SLOPE

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GRADE COMPARISON CHART

