



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Planning and Economic Development Department  
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## IS MY PROPERTY LOCATED IN THE CITY OF POULSBO?

The Poulsbo zip code (98370) extends much further than the city limits. Therefore, we recommend using the Kitsap County parcel viewer to determine if you are indeed within city limits, or unincorporated Kitsap County. After finding your property, click on “Land and Location” and under you will be taken to a Kitsap County webpage. On this site you will see a table that includes “Jurisdiction” which provided the following information —>

Jurisdiction - Tax Code Area
City of Poulsbo - 0415

## WHAT IS MY ZONING?

You can find out what a specific property is zoned by reviewing the [City's Zoning Ordinance Map](#), which is located online. You can also call the Planning & Economic Development Department (PED) at (360) 394-9748. PED staff can identify the zoning and provide information regarding the specific regulations for the zone. Please have an address or tax parcel number available when you call.

## WHAT CAN I BUILD PER MY ZONING?

After determining the zoning, go to the Poulsbo Municipal Code: <http://www.codepublishing.com/WA/Poulsbo/> and look for Title 18, [Zoning Ordinance](#), on the left-hand side. The Zoning Ordinance includes sections with the regulations for each zone, including permitted uses (P), conditional uses (C), administrative conditional uses (AC) and prohibited uses (X); setbacks; maximum building height, lot coverage maximums, and other standards.

## WHAT IS MY HEIGHT LIMIT?

In all [zones](#) the height limit is 35 feet, except for the C-1/Downtown zone. See [PMC 18.80.050](#) for height restrictions in the C-1 zone. See [PMC 18.150.050](#) for building height measurement and [PMC 18.310.010](#) for building height exceptions.

## IS MY PROPERTY LOCATED IN A CRITICAL AREA?

You can find out if a specific property is mapped as being in a potential critical area by reviewing the City's [Critical Area Maps](#), which are located online. Critical Area regulations are in [Chapter 16.20](#) of the PMC and include wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, geologically hazardous areas, critical aquifer recharge areas, and frequently flooded areas. You can also call the PED Department at (360) 394-9748.

## IS THERE ANY WAY TO GET A VARIANCE FROM THE ZONING REGULATIONS?

A variance is a mechanism by which the city may grant relief from the provisions of Title 18 where a practical difficulty renders compliance with the provisions an unnecessary hardship, where the hardship is a result of the special circumstances related to physical characteristics of the subject property, and where the purpose of Title 18 can be fulfilled through the approval of a variance. Please see [Chapter 18.290](#) for more information.

## DO I NEED A PERMIT FOR A SHED?

You will need a building permit to for a shed that exceeds 200 square feet (SF) in size. However, even if you do not need a building permit, the shed is still required to meet the standards in the zoning ordinance. For example, per [PMC 18.310.030](#), storage sheds or other similar detached structures may extend into any side or rear setback up to 3' from the lot line. To extend into a side or rear setback, the structure must be limited to 120 SF in size and no taller than 14' in height. We recommend confirming with the PED Department at (360) 394-9748 to make sure you are meeting zoning standards.

## HOW HIGH CAN MY FENCE BE?

Any fence that exceeds 7' in height requires a building permit and shall conform to the International Building Code, as adopted and amended by the City of Poulsbo. Please see the [Fences in Residential Zones](#) handout for more information.

## WHAT IF THERE IS A DISPUTE BETWEEN NEIGHBORS ABOUT THE LOCATION OF A FENCE?

The locations of fences on private property are considered private, civil matters and the City does not intervene.

## MY NEIGHBOR PUT A FENCE WITH AN UNFINISHED SIDE FACING ME, IS IT LEGAL?

Yes. The aesthetics of fences on private property are considered private, civil matters and the City does not intervene.

## HOW BIG OF A GARAGE CAN I BUILD?

There is no maximum size of garage that you can build. However, each zoning district has limit to the amount of building lot coverage. "Building lot coverage" means that percentage of the total lot area covered by structures, including all projections except eaves, balconies, bay windows, driveways, concrete patios or an uncovered deck thirty-six inches or less above grade. For example, per Table 18.70.050 the maximum building coverage in the residential low zone is 50%.

## WHERE ARE MY PROPERTY LINES?

First, check to see if there are any survey markers at the corner of the property. Unless the property was included in a division of property (such as a short plat, boundary line adjustment or subdivision) the City typically does not contain an inventory of surveys for properties. Therefore, to find the specific location of a property line, a private land surveyor, licensed by the State of Washington, will need to be hired.

## CAN I RUN A BUSINESS FROM MY HOME?

Yes. A home occupation is a business conducted entirely within a residential building or allowed detached accessory structure, which is clearly incidental and secondary to the use of the residence for dwelling purposes; and for which customers or clients visit the home for business purposes. Please see PMC 18.70.070 F.4 and the Home Occupation handout for more information.

## MY NEIGHBOR IS DOING WORK ON THEIR PROPERTY. HOW DO I FIND OUT OF THIS IS LEGAL?

Call the Building Department at (360) 394- 9882, stop by in person on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of City Hall, or check online at <https://ci-poulsbo-wa.smartgovcommunity.com/Public/Home>.

## HOW DO I FILE A COMPLAINT?

Call the Code Enforcement Officer at (360) 394 - 9880, submit a complaint in person on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of City Hall, or submit a complaint online at <https://ci-poulsbo-wa.smartgovcommunity.com/CodeEnforcement/ComplaintEntry>.

## HOW DO I SUBMIT A PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST?

See <https://cityofpoulsbo.com/public-records-requests-2/> for information regarding public records request.

## HOW DO I GET A COPY OF THE ZONING MAP?

All maps are online at <https://cityofpoulsbo.com/codes-amendments-maps/>. Or you can stop by the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of City Hall and we will print you an 11 x 17 zoning map for a fee.

## HOW ARE THE PLANNING AND BUILDINGS DEPARTMENTS DIFFERENT?

Although the Planning and Buildings Departments work on the same floor and collaborate on projects, they are separate departments with different purposes. Generally, the Planning (and Economic Development) Department is responsible for regulating the type and scale of land use activities that may take place at a given location. The Planning Department, through the Zoning Ordinance (Title 18), places limits on activities and the overall dimensions of structures in which can occur. This is accomplished through establishment of controls such as maximum dwelling unit densities, establishment of maximum building heights, setbacks, and parking requirements. The Building Department is responsible for all structural and life safety concerns in the construction, demolition or alteration of buildings including, but not limited to, matters such as electrical and plumbing permits, HVAC systems, energy standards and handicapped access pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

## HOW CAN I LEARN ABOUT CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE CITY?

To view a list of active PED Department development projects, please click [here](#).

